SHAME CULTURE OR GUILT CULTURE:
THE EVIDENCE OF THE MEDIEVAL FRENCH FABLIAUX

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Many literary critics have posited that during the Middle Ages society evolved from a shame culture, a culture in which honour was highly prized, to a guilt culture, a culture in which the Christian moral code was the predominant determiner of ethical behaviour. An examination of shame and guilt in the French fabliaux suggests otherwise. Beginning with a careful definition of shame and guilt as developed by anthropologists and psychologists, this study examines the vocabulary used to express shame and guilt. On this basis several semantic networks are constructed which reveal that shame is described not only by terms indicating diminished status and baseness but also by expressions from other realms of experience, such as terms describing staining, soiling, or filth, and expressions indicating punishment. Guilt in contrast is described only by terms which of necessity must indicate guilt given its definition: terms denoting misdeeds, transgressions, offences, recompense, forgiveness and punishment. Many terms indicative of guilt are in fact related to punishment and vengeance and are employed only in situations in which punishment is pending. An awareness of how one's actions have harmed the other is all but absent from the vocabulary of guilt. Feelings of shame occur more frequently than feelings of guilt and are typically central to the plot. Feelings of guilt in contrast are generally experienced only when characters expect to receive punishment. Intention plays a very minor part in determining whether or not a character feels guilty -- all that matters is that a wrongful act has been committed. As agents of social control, both shame and guilt are frequently used in the fabliaux as sanctions against sexual impropriety. Shame is also frequently employed as a sanction against characters who seek to rise above their station, characters who demonstrate stupidity, those who are deceived or act like a fool,

and those who exhibit cowardly or disloyal behavior. The sanctions of guilt are employed in more narrowly conscribed circumstances. Shame is generally an effective deterrent in the fabliaux, while guilt usually is not. All of this suggests the greater importance of shame.

To John, Teddy, and Maggie

and in memory of Laurence E. Eaton
1922-1998

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, scholars of medieval literature have debated whether the Middle Ages were a shame culture or a guilt culture -- that is, whether the most powerful sanction shaping people's thoughts and actions was shame or guilt. The question is an intriguing one. Anthropologists generally agree that modern North American culture is a guilt culture,[1] but earlier periods of history have been the subject of much debate. Scholars less familiar with the Middle Ages often assume it was a guilt culture, given the predominance of the church in medieval society, but others have disagreed.[2] There has also been considerable debate concerning if, when, and where a transition from a shame culture to a guilt culture occurred. One anthropologist has claimed that western civilization evolved from a shame culture to a guilt culture in nineteenth century America.[3] Some historians have said that a transition from a shame culture to a guilt culture took place in Europe during the Protestant Reformation[4]; others claim such a transition took place in the Middle Ages, during the twelfth or the fourteenth centuries.[5]

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[1]See for example Millie R. Creighton, "Revisiting Shame and Guilt Cultures: A Forty-Year Pilgrimage," Ethos 18:3 (1990): 279-307.

[2]Gerhart Piers and Milton B. Singer, Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and a Cultural Study (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1971) 54. Cf. Franz Alexander, "Remarks About the Relation of Inferiority Feelings to Guilt Feelings," International Journal of Psychoanalysis 19 (1938): 48-49. Concerning those who have characterized the Middle Ages as a shame culture, see below.

[3]John Demos, "Shame and Guilt in Early New England," in Emotion and Social Change: Toward a New Psychohistory, ed. Carol Z. Stearns and Peter N. Stearns (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1988) 69-85.

[4]See especially Jean Delumeau, Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th - 18th Centuries, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990). Delumeau locates the birth of a guilt culture in the second half of the fourteenth century but sees the height of its expression in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[5]Giles Constable, "Twelfth-Century Spirituality and the Late Middle Ages," Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Proceedings of the Southeastern Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Summer 1969, ed. O.B. Hardison, Jr., Medieval and Renaissance Series 5 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1971) 27-60. Constable sees "signs of deep feelings of guilt and hostility" (p. 28) in popular demonstrations of devotion, such as the flagellant movement, dance frenzies, and witch hunts of the fifteenth century, and links these with earlier developments in twelfth-century spirituality, which shared with the Renaissance "an affinity of religious temperament" (p. 32). He feels the true turning point in religious history occurred in the twelfth century; it was only in the fifteenth century that the full manifestations of these

The Mediterranean regions of Europe today are still generally characterized by anthropologists as shame cultures.[6]

Interestingly, the evidence which modern scholars have used to explore the question of whether past periods of history were shame or guilt cultures has been largely literary. It is unclear whether this is due to the greater richness of literary texts in yielding (and unfortunately also distorting) answers to questions concerning values, beliefs, and that grab-bag of mental constructs included under the umbrella term *mentalité*, or whether it is a case of pure happenstance stemming from the fact that the earliest medievalists to make use of the shame/guilt dichotomy were literary critics rather than historians.[7] In this thesis I explore the evidence for the existence of shame and guilt cultures in the Middle Ages by using as evidence a literary genre which, to my knowledge, has not yet been analyzed for this purpose: the French fabliaux. My focus is that of the historian. While an implicit goal in this study is to elucidate the literary text, my primary goal is to understand the underlying mentalities. I do not intend to reveal definitive evidence proving that the Middle Ages, or even north-eastern France, the region where the fabliaux flourished, were a shame or guilt culture; as will be shown below, no society is a pure shame or guilt culture. I will, however, given the limitations of the fabliaux as a historical source, attempt to discern what was understood by shame and guilt, assess whether shame or guilt plays a more predominant role in the fabliaux and, most importantly, trace how shame and guilt relate to other components of the medieval mentality and to one another.

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developments appear. On scholars who see the transition occurring in the fourteenth century, see below.

[6]The seminal work in this area is the collection of essays in Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society, ed. J.G. Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966). See especially the introduction by J.G. Peristiany, and "Honor and Social Status" by Julian Pitt-Rivers, pp. 21-73.

[7]Delumeau makes heavy use of didactic and confessional works. Constable makes use of a wide array of didactic, spiritual and theological texts. Neither of these two authors makes explicit use of the shame culture/guilt culture dichotomy, however, although Delumeau uses the term "guilt culture" and Constable refers to "signs of deep feelings of guilt and hostility" (p. 28). All of the scholarship which does make explicit use of the shame culture/guilt culture dichotomy deals with strictly literary texts, as discussed below. Some recent scholarship from France (see below, n. 55) using the honor/shame model from the work of J.G. Peristiany and Julian Pitt-Rivers in Honor and Shame draws from what is commonly regarded as strictly "historical" sources such as criminal records.

Previous Scholarship on Shame Culture/Guilt Culture in Pre-Reformation European Society

Since the 1960s, literary critics examining literature from ancient Greece to modern times have examined the question of whether society was a shame culture or a guilt culture. Because I am focusing on the Middle Ages, I limit my review of past scholarship to critics concerned with Europe from the time of the ancient Greeks until the end of the Middle Ages. What is remarkable in reviewing the past scholarship on the subject is not only the variety of conclusions which scholars have reached, but the variety of definitions they have employed in defining what is a shame culture and guilt culture. Plainly one is not unrelated to the other.

E.R. Dodds and A.W.H. Adkins, writing in 1968 and 1972 respectively, are among the first to apply the concept of shame and guilt cultures to literary texts. Both describe the Homeric poems as the products of a shame culture.[8] In the works of Homer, they note, fame is presented as the highest reward for heroism, the strongest moral force against wrongdoing, and the principle motivation for all action. The gods at worst are feared only as temperamental overlords who, like the human beings over whom they watch, are preoccupied with their own honor. There is no real concept of sin. According to Dodds, this Homeric world stands in marked contrast to the later Archaic age, an age of guilt in which heroic success was no longer so much a cause for honor as it was feared because it could arouse the wrath and hostility of the gods. Vague guilt-ridden anxieties over offending the gods figure prominently, for the gods have now become stern agents of justice who cruelly punish malefactors, either in this world or the next. Bernard Williams, writing in 1993, suggests that even Homeric society was familiar with guilt, as evidenced by the prominent role which indignation, reparation and forgiveness assume in the early Greek epic.[9] In his view, however, Greek society was still dominated by shame and subsumed under "shame" concepts that we would typically recognize as guilt: "The truth about Greek societies, and in particular the Homeric, is not that they failed to recognize any of the reactions that we associate with guilt, but that they did not make of those reactions the special

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[8]E.R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968) 17-18, 28-63; A.W.H. Adkins, Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece from Homer to the End of the Fifth Century (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972) 12-21, 61, 138.

[9]Bernard Williams, Shame and Necessity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). See especially pp. 219-223.

thing that they became when they are separately recognized as guilt."[10]

Eugene Vance in his 1971 study Reading the Song of Roland identifies the Song of Roland as the product of a shame culture.[11] He writes:

> ... the fear of God, despite the Christian context of the poem, is not the strongest moral force its characters know; rather, it is respect for public opinion. The enjoyment of honor is more their goal than a quiet conscience.[12]

Vance does not by extension characterize all society at that period as a shame culture, though, but instead distinguishes between secular and religious world views. While noblemen enjoyed vernacular epics such as the Song of Roland in which the emphasis was on brave deeds that brought honor and fame, their counterparts in religious houses were reading reflective Latin epics such as Eupolemius in which the heroes were Biblical figures and personifications of the virtues and vices, the main action consisted of sermonizing exhortations, and allegory comprised the essence of the narrative. Vance thereby implies that it was primarily laymen, "the men of active life," who operated under a shame culture ethos while their clerical contemporaries, "the contemplative m[e]n in the cloister," lived within the framework of a guilt culture.

Yet another work identified as having been written in the spirit of a shame culture is Malory's Morte Darthur. Mark Lambert observes that Malory's characters are far more concerned with shame and honor than with guilt and innocence.[13] When Lancelot confesses to the hermit, he laments not his sins in and of themselves, but how they have brought him dishonor. When blood is found in the Queen's bed, Lancelot, who has recently been wounded, is accused of sleeping with the Queen. He asserts that the Queen is innocent and successfully defends her honor in trial by combat. It does not seem to matter to Malory that Lancelot is lying, nor do the other characters, Arthur included, ever attempt to find an explanation for the bloody bed once Lancelot has defeated the Queen's accuser. Questions of guilt and innocence are irrelevant. What is important is that the Queen's honor has been maintained. Similar to Vance, Lambert does not argue from this evidence that all English society at this time operated within a

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[10]Williams 90.

[11]Eugene Vance, Reading the Song of Roland (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971) 36-38.

[12]Vance 36.

[13]Mark Lambert, Malory: Style and Vision in Le Morte Darthur (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) 176-194.

shame culture. He notes how, according to psychologists, all people have a sense of shame and guilt, and that the strength of each varies from one person to another, as well as from one culture to another. While Malory is greatly preoccupied with honor and shame, Chaucer, who predates Malory by nearly a century, shows a far greater concern for guilt. Like Vance, then, Lambert recognizes the possibility of a shame culture and a guilt culture coexisting, but instead of accounting for their coexistence by the distinction between castle and cloister, he seems to view it more as a matter of the individual author's personality.

Other scholars have found in some works, including the Morte Darthur, evidence of both shame and guilt. D.S. Brewer describes the Morte Darthur as not of a shame culture, as Lambert would have it, but about a shame culture and hence (one may assume) of a guilt culture.[14] Like Lambert, Brewer notes that the major portion of the work stresses the value of honor and reputation. Initially honor seems to be identified with goodness. In the oath which Arthur has his knights take at Pentecost, the knights swear to avoid treason, to be merciful, to assist women in distress, and to avoid wrongful quarrels on pain of losing their honor and being ejected from Arthur's court. With Guinevere's adultery, though, honor and goodness assume divergent paths, for Lancelot must tell lies and take on wrongful quarrels to defend the honor of the Queen. Eventually honor comes to destroy that very world which it had helped to create. The pride and honor which made Arthur found the Round Table ultimately ruin it when Arthur must enforce the public law concerning adultery, and Lancelot's pride and honor, the very source of his valiance and prowess, cause him to be disloyal to Arthur when he defends the Queen, to whom he is bound by honor. When Lancelot and Guinevere finally turn to penitence, honor is at last repudiated, and guilt and innocence now become the measures of goodness. Malory does not thereby dismiss the value of honor, however; even after the repentance of Lancelot and Guinevere he speaks of "worshipful" (that is, honorable) men with respect; he shows Lancelot, who in a sense is the very embodiment of worldly honor, making a good end; and he has Sir Ector exalt Lancelot's honorable life in a eulogy at his death. Malory thus suggests that although honor will bring about its own downfall, still it is an enduring virtue which can and should become identified with inner goodness. Although Brewer does not explicitly use the term "guilt culture," nevertheless he may be understood as implying that it ultimately predominates over

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[14]D.S. Brewer, ed., The Morte Darthur, Parts Seven and Eight, by Sir Thomas Malory (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1968) 23-35.

shame in the Morte Darthur.[15]

Loretta Wasserman provides a similar analysis of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.[16] The main events of the story all fit neatly within the framework of a shame culture. Gawain, acting as representative of King Arthur's court, accepts the challenge of the Green Knight in order to defend the honor of the court. He is taunted by Sir Bertilac's wife for his lack of manliness and later is shamed when he accepts the gift of the garter, both because he consequently breaks his agreement with the host to present him with everything he has won that day and because the garter is a gift more valuable than he can ever hope to return in kind. King Arthur's court, consistent with a shame culture ethos, judges matters solely on the basis of external appearances and hence feels its honor has been adequately defended simply because Gawain has on the face of it met the Green Knight's challenge. Gawain, however, internalizes his failure regarding the gift of the garter and experiences a sense of guilt. In Wasserman's words, the persistence of Gawain's shame

> suggests a deep feeling of violation and self-betrayal, and, we conjecture, the inward feeling of shame, which is guilt, and which persists after his mark of shame has been removed...Gawain's persistence in blaming himself -- he never appears to respond to the court's effort to reconcile him to his weaknesses -- hints at a necessary defining of the limits of the [honor-shame] code. "What people say" is not the ultimate determiner of honor, but what is hidden from view, a good heart.[17]

Although Wasserman, like Brewer, does not actually use the expression "guilt culture", she does seem to imply that Gawain has left the shame culture world represented by the court and begun to function within the framework of a guilt culture.[18]

Joseph Szövérffy notes a similar transition from shame to guilt in Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival.[19] According to Szövérffy, the work begins very much within the

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[15]Brewer draws on Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers.

[16]Loretta Wasserman, "Honor and Shame in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," in Chivalric Literature: Essays on Relations Between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages ed. Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) 77-90.

[17]Wasserman 89, 90.

[18]For the anthropology of honor and shame, Wasserman draws on Peristiany.

[19]Joseph Szövérffy, "'Artuswelt' und 'Gralwelt': Shame Culture and Guilt Culture in 'Parzival'," Paradosis: Studies in Memory of Edwin A. Quain (New York: Fordham University Press, 1976) 85-98.

framework of a shame culture. The main goal of all the characters is to increase their honor; considerations of Christian morality play almost no role. Szövérffy terms this shame culture world the Artuswelt, the world of Arthur's court. Parzival eagerly learns the rules of the Artuswelt, including the injunction not to ask too many questions. When Parzival enters the castle of the fisher-king, however, he unknowingly passes into a guilt culture world, termed the Gralwelt by Szövérffy. Because he mistakenly applies the rules of the Artuswelt to the Gralwelt, Parzival fails to ask the all-important question about Amfortas's suffering. When Cundrîe later appears in Arthur's court and publicly denounces him for this failure, Parzival, still functioning within a shame culture ethos, feels deeply shamed but experiences no guilt. In his subsequent flight from Arthur's court and encounters with various religious figures, and most especially his uncle, the hermit Trevrizent, Parzival gradually learns the meaning of guilt. When he comes to the realization that he has sinned, he makes a successful transition from the Artuswelt to the Gralwelt and is able at last to ask the compassionate question and end the suffering of the members of the Grail community. The transition from shame culture to guilt culture thus constitutes the core of the narrative.

R. Howard Bloch in an analysis of Béroul's Tristan identifies a similar transition from a shame culture to a guilt culture.[20] According to Bloch, until King Marc discovers Tristan and Iseut sleeping together in the forest, the characters operate within the framework of a shame culture. King Marc, for instance, is persistent in pursuing Tristan and Iseut not because of his own feelings regarding the adultery, but because of external pressure from his barons. When he discovers the lovers sleeping together in the woods, though, King Marc breaks from the shame culture ethos. According to medieval law and the code of honor, he has every right to kill the adulterous pair, but instead he leaves them with only a sign that he was there. He is now following his own personal inclinations, symptomatic of a guilt culture. Upon awakening, Tristan and Iseut also cease to think exclusively in terms of honor and shame; for the first time they begin to feel guilt over their adulterous affair. The barons, representing the voice of the community's disapproval, play a much diminished role in the remainder of the work, their prohibitions having now been internalized as guilt. R. Howard Bloch links this transition from a shame culture to a guilt culture with more general changes in medieval western European society at that time: the growth of the modern notion of the state, the development of subjectivity within

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[20]R. Howard Bloch, "Tristan, the Myth of the State and the Language of the Self," Yale French Studies 51 (1974): 61-81. This article is further developed in Bloch's Medieval French Literature and Law (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

the narrative, and the birth of subjective conscience. In leaving his ring, glove and sword with the sleeping lovers, for instance, King Marc is performing "a one-sided gesture of possession much closer to the notion of generalized social contract than to vassalage."[21] Thus for Bloch the transition from shame culture to guilt culture evidenced in Béroul's Tristan is a manifestation of greater changes in the medieval western European world view as a whole.

The literary scholarship on shame cultures and guilt cultures thus varies considerably, even with respect to just the Middle Ages. Vance identifies shame culture values with lay society and guilt culture values with the religious. Lambert in contrast implies that whether an author adopted the viewpoint of a shame culture or a guilt culture depended on the individual author's personality. Bloch and, less explicitly, Brewer, Szövérffy and Wasserman seem to suggest that all society underwent a transition from a shame culture to a guilt culture, though there is some discrepancy among them as to when this transition took place. While Bloch and Szövérffy treat of works written in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries respectively, Wasserman's study concerns a late fourteenth century piece and Brewer's study concerns a work written in the fifteenth century. Bloch and Szövérffy are concerned with works of French literature, while Wasserman and Brewer write about works composed in England. What may have given rise to the appearance of a guilt culture is also the subject of some controversy.

Previous Scholarship on Interiority

R. Howard Bloch suggests that the development of a guilt culture went hand-in-glove with the rise of the "interiority" which characterized the Renaissance of the twelfth century.[22] Numerous scholars, especially in the late 1960s and 1970s, have written on the appearance of this "interiority," typically marshalling a wide variety of literary and historical evidence to demonstrate what is hailed as a fundamental shift in medieval culture.[23] Peter Abelard is

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[21]Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law 245.

[22]Bloch, "Tristan, the Myth of the State". This notion is further developed in Bloch's Medieval French Literature and Law.

[23]Scholars writing on "interiority" include Marie-Dominique Chenu, L'éveil de la conscience dans la civilisation médiévale, Conférence Albert-le-Grand (Montreal: Inst. d'Études médiévales, 1968); Constable; Robert Hanning, "Engin in Twelfth-Century Romance: An Examination of the Roman d'Eneas and Hue de Roteland's Ipomedon," Yale French Studies 51 (1975): 82-101; Dom David Knowles, "The Humanism of the Twelfth Century," The Historian and Character and Other Essays (Cambridge University Press, 1963)16-30; Richard W. Southern, "Medieval Humanism," Medieval

frequently cited for his insistence that the morality of an act depended solely on the intention with which it was performed,[24] and for his insistence on contrition as the essence of the sacrament of penance. As expressed by Abelard, this doctrine held that sincere contrition motivated by charity -- that is, love of God -- was all that was necessary for the forgiveness of sins.[25] Legal evidence is also often cited: at law, and firstly in canonical jurisprudence, intention

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Humanism and Other Studies (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970) 29-60; the same author's The Making of the Middle Ages (New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1953), especially ch. 5, "From Epic to Romance," 220-257; Charles M. Radding, "Evolution of Medieval Mentalities: A Cognitive-Structural Approach," American Historical Review 83 (1978): 577-597, and Colin Morris, The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200 (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). Note that most scholars in fact do not use the term "interiority." Chenu uses the expression "the discovery of an interior world." Hanning uses the terms "self-consciousness" and "inner sphere of experience" and discusses people's "heightened awareness of their identity as individuals involved in a private relationship with God and with their own desires." Knowles discusses the "capability of self-expression", enabling people to "give adequate expression to their emotions, and "a high value set upon the individual, personal emotions, and upon the sharing of experiences and opinions within a small circle of friends." Morris writes of the "development of self-awareness and self-expression." Radding relates such changes to a move away from "moral realism", a stage in cognitive development described by Jean Piaget as characteristic of children who are concerned only with adherence to rules and the results of actions, to higher stages of moral reasoning which emphasize interpersonal relationships, human rights and social contracts, and universal principles of justice.

[24]This belief was repeatedly echoed by sermon writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, who stressed that having good intentions was more important than performing good acts and insisted that good deeds had no merit if not accompanied by good intention. Maurice de Sully emphasizes in several sermons that the good works performed by bad people are useless and not pleasing to God. See Michel Zink, La prédication en langue romane avant 1300, Nouv. bibliothèque du moyen âge, vol. 4 (Paris: H. Champion, 1976) 443-444; and Aimé Solignac, "Les prédicateurs de la fin du XIIe siècle," in Le pardon, actes du Colloque des 19 et 21 septembre 1985, organisé par le Centre Histoire des Idées, Université de Picardie, ed. Michel Perrin (Paris: Beauchesne, 1987) 113.

[25]Thomas N. Tentler, Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977) 19; Paul F. Palmer, Sacraments and Forgiveness: History and Doctrinal Development of Penance, Extreme Unction and Indulgences, Sources of Christian Theology, vol. 2 (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1959) 186, 198. Paul Anciaux in La théologie du sacrement de pénitence au XIIe siècle (Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1949), provides a detailed account of the evolution of the doctrine of contritionism in the twelfth century. Like Abelard, other early scholastics also insisted that contrition must come from the motive of charity, or love of God. Numerous influential theologians followed Abelard's teaching on this subject, including Hugh of St. Victor, Alain de Lille, Gratian, and Peter Lombard. St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century played down the role of contrition by saying that, while contrition was essential for the remission of sin, the priest's absolution, in the form of the words, "I absolve you", comprised the form of the sacrament, just as the words "I baptize thee" were the form of the sacrament of baptism. Hence for Aquinas contrition was effective only in combination with the absolution granted by the priest. The doctrine of contritionism was still often alluded to in vernacular sermons in the thirteenth century. See Zink 440-446.

came to be recognized as an important element in assessing the punishment due for a crime. In the twelfth century, for instance, a cleric who accidentally killed could be excused if the act that resulted in the death was itself lawful and exercised with due care. Henry de Bracton in his thirteenth century legal treatise On the Laws and Customs of England lists self-defense as an excuse for killing, although a royal letter of grace had to be obtained before a pardon could be granted. The importance placed on self-knowledge by such authors as Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, William of St. Thierry, and Hugh and Richard of St. Victor is also adduced as evidence of the appearance of interiority; all of these authors insisted on self-knowledge as key to the man's progress towards God.[26] Abelard's work on ethics is subtitled "Know thyself." St. Bernard in De diligendo Deo described self-discovery and self-love as part of the process of ascending to the love of God. He emphasized the importance of feelings in his sermons, stating that piety existed not in the external observance of rules but in intense personal devotion. He discussed at length the inner attitudes required of the penitent[27]. Writers such as Alain of Lille developed the theme of the "book of conscience," a book whose reading instills us with remorse; numerous treatises on De conscientiae also appear at this time. Guibert of Nogent, at the beginning of his history of the Crusades, commented on the need but also the difficulty of understanding the thoughts of others:

> It is hardly surprising if we make mistakes in narrating the actions of other people, when we cannot express in words even our own thoughts and deeds; in fact, we can hardly sort them out in our own minds. It is useless to talk about intentions, which, as we know, are often so concealed as scarcely to be discernible to the understanding of the inner man.[28]

The long interior monologues found in the romances of the twelfth century also have been viewed as evidence of the appearance of "interiority."

Closely related to, and indeed part of the same trend, is the so-called "rise of the individual" which supposedly characterized the Renaissance of the twelfth century.[29] Several trends have commonly been cited which all seem to point to a new awareness of the "individual".

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[26]Constable 35-36.

[27]Zink 446.

[28]Quotation from Morris 66.

[29]See especially Morris and other works cited in footnote n. 23 above. See also Robert W. Hanning, The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

There was a new emphasis on the need for a person to exercise choice in the shaping of his or her own destiny. Hence the practice of oblation faded into obscurity, with the Cistercians finally abandoning it around 1100. Some heretics in the eleventh century even began to question the value of infant baptism. The breakdown of feudal society and the appearance of corporations, communes and universities provided new scope for the initiative of the individual. St. Anselm's De libertate arbitrii emphasized man's free will, his ability to choose to sin or to refrain. Although Anselm affirms that man must rely on the grace of God in order to exercise his freedom of choice properly, still Anselm's thought represents a major shift from previous theological tracts which placed more emphasis on how man was condemned through original sin. Further evidence of the "rise of the individual" has been found in expressions of friendship and personal experience in poems, letters, and "confessions", such as the writings of Ailred de Rievaulx, Abelard's Historia calamitatum, or the love letters and poetry exchanged between Abelard and Héloïse. The vocabulary used to describe love, as for example in St. Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs, takes on a new richness in this period. The emphasis in devotional literature on developing a friendship with God, and, beginning as early as the eleventh century, the theme of tenderness and compassion for the sufferings of Christ which became prevalent in monastic writings have also been viewed as characteristic of the "rise of the individual."[30] The substitution of the inquest for trials by ordeal, beginning firstly in canon law in the twelfth century and becoming widely used by the French monarchy by the mid-thirteenth century, has been interpreted as evidence that crime was no longer seen as a conflict between two families, that of the victim and that of the criminal, but a conflict between the individual and the state, with the court system now able to initiate actions even without formal complaint or accusations from the victim or his or her family, and with fines in royal courts now going to the king as well as towards restitution to the victim's family.[31]

It is now generally accepted that the "rise of the individual" did not entail an actual

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[30]Constable 45. See for example the writings of St. Anselm, quoted in Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages 233: "Alas that I was not there to see the Lord of angels humbled to the companionship of men, that He might exalt men to the companionship of angels....Why, O my soul, wert thou not present to be transfixed with the sword of sharpest grief at the unendurable sight of your Saviour pierced with the lance, and the hands and feet of your Maker broken with the nails?"

[31]See especially Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law, ch. 3; and R.W. Kaeuper, War, Justice and Public Order. England and France in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), ch. 2, 134-183. In the case of Parlement, for example, the usual penalty was a fine paid to the king and a fine paid to the injured party (p. 166).

conflict between the individual and society. Indeed, according to Caroline Walker Bynum, the twelfth century is characterized less by a "rise of the individual" than by a growing awareness and use of models (e.g., the primitive church, the desert fathers, or Christ himself) and a concern with defining, classifying and defending the growing number of new groups appearing (e.g., communes, guilds, schools, and the new religious orders).[32] Still the new emphasis on free will, the expressions of individual thought and feelings, and the shift in emphasis towards the individual at law do appear to indicate a change in medieval culture which may be linked to a shift from shame to guilt as the predominant social sanction.

Several authors have also linked the evolution of a guilt culture with canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, requiring that all Christians confess their sins at least once a year to their parish priest. Although annual confession was the mandated practice in some regions even before 1215, the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council made annual penance a reality for most Christians and, according to some modern scholars, was the chief means by which a rule of life designed for monks and ascetics was extended to the population as a whole.[33] The practice of annual confession in combination with the evangelization efforts of the mendicant orders and the political and demographic crises of the fourteenth centuries are said to have produced by the fourteenth century what Jean Delumeau terms variously as "scruple sickness", "an oppressive feeling of guilt," and an "unprecedented movement toward introspection."[34] Other historians disagree; Lawrence Duggan argues that he

> cannot believe that a Church unable to reform itself from within, unable to enforce celibacy among the clergy, unable to prevent clandestine marriages among the laity or to teach them little more than the Pater Noster, the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Deadly Sins (if all of these) -- that this Church nevertheless had the

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[32]Caroline Walker Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?" in Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). Bynum argues that the twelfth century was characterized not so much by a rise of "the individual" as by the desire to model oneself according to the standards of a particular model or group, e.g., the life of Christ or members of one's chosen commune, guild, or religious order.

[33]Delumeau; Tentler, Sin and Confession; and Roberto Rusconi, "De la prédication à la confession: Transmission et contrôle de modèles de comportement au XIIIe siècle," in Faire croire. Modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XIIe au XVe siècle. Table ronde organisée par l'Ecole Française de Rome (Rome, 22-23 juin, 1979), ed. André Vauchez, Collection de l'Ecole Française de Rome 51 (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1981) 79-80.

[34]Delumeau 1, 5.

> authority and the capacity to nurture millions of overly scrupulous souls.[35]

Duggan's insight notwithstanding, court records from Manosque nevertheless seem to indicate some sort of shift towards a greater awareness of sin. By the fourteenth century they are studded with references to Christian morality where none occurred earlier. For example, the adulterer in the fourteenth century is said not just to have committed adultery but to have failed to be mindful of his soul, to be ignoring Christ, and to have submitted to the seductions of the devil.[36] Such references may have had their origin in a new concept of the law as an instrument for preserving public order and preventing the proliferation of evil, where previously it was primarily a device to channel and control private acts of revenge.[37] The appearance of these religious references may also indicate the increasing influence of canon law, which made a distinction between the guilt (*culpa*) and sin (*contemptus*) of the guilty. Canonists were interested in discerning not just whether a wrongful act had been committed, but also whether the accused was sinful, acting with a depraved heart, mind and soul.[38]

Canon 21 may have had other ramifications linked to "interiority" as well. The priest's role as confessor transformed him into a counselor of souls, as canon 21 itself insists:

> Let the priest be cautious and discreet, so that, like a skilled physician, he may pour wine and oil on the wounds of the injured man, diligently examining the circumstances of both sin and sinner, through which he may prudently learn what kind of advice he should offer, and what kind of remedy he should apply -- trying various methods -- to heal the sick man.[39]

The new "summae confessorum" characteristic of the post-Lateran period advised the priest to inquire carefully into all the circumstances in which the sin was committed. The intention was

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[35]Lawrence Duggan, "Fear and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation," Archiv für Reformationgeschichte 75 (1984): 173.

[36]Rodrigue Lavoie, "Justice, morale et sexualité à Manosque (1240-1430)," in Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du moyen âge. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. Michel Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, Service des Publications, 1987) 9-21.

[37]Lavoie, "Justice, morale et sexualité" 15.

[38]Harold J. Berman, Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983) 185-194

[39]Quote from Thomas N. Tentler, "The Summa for Confessors as an Instrument of Social Control," The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion (Leyde, 1974) 104.

partly to make certain that an appropriate penance was assigned, but it also helped a priest to better educate and advise the penitent.[40] In general, penitential literature from the thirteenth century onwards shows a greater concern for the psychological aspects of contrition and confession than is evidenced in earlier penitential manuals.[41] For instance, Robert of Flamborough's influential Liber Poenitentialis, dating from the beginning of the thirteenth century, suggests that the priest engage in a sort of progressive bargaining with the penitent until the priest can assign a penance that he is assured the penitent will accept.[42] The widely-circulated Poeniteas cito peccator, a didactic poem on confession which was a common set-text in primary schools, advised the confessor to adapt his behavior to the requirements of the penitent, being "At times like a father chastising with the rod,/At times like a mother proffering her breast."[43] All this shows a keen awareness of the "inner landscape."

Whether this growth in interiority actually contributed to, or was linked to, the evolution of a guilt culture, however, is largely an unproven hypothesis.

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[40]Lester K. Little, "Les techniques de la confession et la confession comme technique," Faire croire. Modalités de la diffusion et de la reception des messages religieux du XIIe au XVe siècle. Table ronde organisé par l'Ecole Française de Rome (Rome, 22-23 juin, 1979), ed. André Vauchez, Collection de l'Ecole Française de Rome 51 (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1981) 96, 98; Chenu 45; Pierre Michaud-Quantin, Sommes de casuistique et manuels de confession au moyen âge, Analecta Medievalia namurcensia 13 (Louvain: Edit. Nauwelaerts, 1962) 23-24. Cf. also Nicole Bériou, "La confession dans les écrits théologiques et pastoraux du XIIIe siècle. Médication de l'âme ou démarche judiciaire?" L'Aveu: Antiquité et Moyen Age. Actes de la Table ronde organisée par l'Ecole Française de Rome avec le concours du CNRS et de l'Université de Trieste - Rome, 28-30 mars 1984, Collections de l'Ecole Française de Rome 88 (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1986) 261-282. Bériou notes that both the judicial and the medical image of confession were widely used in the thirteenth century both by theologians and in the more popular confessional manuals. The medical metaphor emphasized that the purpose of the sacrament of penance was to heal the sinner of his sin and thus tended to stress the role of the priest as counselor. The juridical metaphor in contrast presented penance as a "correction" to sin and placed more emphasis on the satisfaction performed, but in its emphasis on understanding the circumstances under which the sin was committed, it still was typical of a trend towards "interiority." See also Joseph Goering, "The Internal Forum and the Literature of Penance and Confession," ts., 1994, to be published in The History of Medieval Canon Law, ed. W. Hartmann and K. Pennington (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press). Both Bériou and Goering note that the medical imagery tends to predominate in earlier penitential manuals while juridical imagery is more common in the later manuals from the thirteenth century onwards, a trend no doubt related to the increasing use of casuistry.

[41]Joseph Goering, "The Summa of Magister Serlo and Thirteenth-Century Penitential Literature," Mediaeval Studies 40 (1978): 290-311.

[42]Rusconi 79; Tentler, Sin and Confession 17.

[43]Quote from Tentler, Sin and Confession 96; Cf. Goering, "The Internal Forum".

Previous Scholarship on Shame in Medieval Society

Only in the last thirty years have modern scholars of French history turned their attention to shame in the Middle Ages. Shaming ceremonies such as charivaris, *chevauchées de l'âne*, and public dunkings have often been noted by medieval historians, though not in the context of a "shame culture". The clerical Feast of Fools that took place during the twelve days of Christmas often entailed public denunciations in verse of high ecclesiastics, either during a burlesque parody of the mass, or in the form of satirical plays staged in the church. *Carnaval* and other festivals often included public shaming rituals such as public parades in which those who had violated the norms of conjugal relations (men who beat their wives -- especially during the month of May -- as well as cuckolds and men who were beaten by their wives) were mocked in a brief play or mock-trial staged before the houses of their victims. Town gossip became the subject for humorous plays staged during *carnaval* celebrations, and political allusions critical of injustices, immorality, and abuses of the civic and ecclesiastical authorities were made in the various farces and *sottes* conducted during the processions.[44] Virtually all such shaming ceremonies appear to have been carried out by groups of unmarried men, either groups of unmarried men organized into secular societies called variously "abbayes de jeunesse," "sociétés joyeuses" and "bachelleries," or clerics from the ranks of the lower clergy who conducted the Feast of Fools that took place during the twelve days of Christmas.[45] The typical explanation for

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[44]On shaming ceremonies during feasts of fools, see Enid Welsford, The Fool: His Social and Literary History (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1966) 199-219; E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), vol. 1, ch. 13-15. On carnival, see especially Martine Grinberg in "Carnaval et société urbaine XIVe - XVIe siècles: Le royaume dans la ville," Ethnologie française 4.3 (1974): 215-244. On charivaris and bachelleries, see Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule," Past and Present 50 (1971): 41-75; Claude Gauvard and Altan Gokalp, "Les conduits de bruit et leur signification à la fin du Moyen Age: Le charivari," Annales E.S.C. 29 (1974): 693-704; Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt, eds., Le Charivari: Actes de la table ronde organisée à Paris (25-27 avril 1977) par l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales et le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Centre de Recherches Historiques; Civilisations et Sociétés 67 (Paris: Mouton Éditeur, 1981), especially the article by Martine Grinberg, "Charivaris au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance: Condamnation des remariages ou rites d'inversion du temps?", pp. 141-147; Nicole Pellegrin, Les bachelleries. Organisations et fêtes de la jeunesse dans le Centre-Ouest XVe - XVIIIe siècles, Mémoires de la Société des antiquaires de l'ouest, series 4 (Poitiers, 1982); and Jacques Rossiaud, "Fraternités de jeunesse et niveaux de culture dans les villes du Sud-Est à la fin du Moyen Age," Cahiers d'histoire 1-2 (1976): 67-102. On the *chevauchées de l'âne*, see Ruth Mellinkoff, "Riding Backwards: Theme of Humiliation and Symbol of Evil," Viator 4 (1973): 153-176.

[45]There is some controversy as to whether, where, or when married men were included in the secular youth groups. Pellegrin notes that, by the seventeenth century, newly married men as yet

such ceremonies is that they were either a form of social control designed to humiliate those who had violated social norms, or they served as a "safety valve" for groups of young men who either had limited opportunity to move up the ecclesiastical hierarchy or, because of the demographic crises of the later Middle Ages -- which resulted in a delay in the age of marriage and a large pool of unmarried youth -- to enter into marriage. In combining these two functions, one can also see the ceremonies as a form of socialization. According to Natalie Zemon Davis, society socialized youth "to the conscience of the community by making them the raucous voice of that conscience."[46] Martine Grinberg sees in these ceremonies a ritualized inversion designed to address the imbalance which a violation of social norms had caused.[47] Anthropologist Mahadev Apte in an examination of the various functions of ritual humor in religion notes all of these functions and other possibilities as well. He observes that the "taboos" which are sometimes broken in ritual humor (e.g., by parodying the mass, making fun of one's superiors or people in positions of power) may be a way of dealing with the taboos which haunt people the most. Ritual humor can also be a way to "ritually mediate between the numerous oppositions within the structure of...culture and society."[48] The humor can also serve the basic function of providing pure entertainment. What is important, stresses Apte, and what I attempt to accomplish in this thesis, is to understand the cultural context for this humor. Only then can the function of shame be identified.

Important for this study is the time period in which these various shaming ceremonies flourished. Youth groups were in existence since at least the thirteenth century; they appear

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without children were included in some youth groups. Rossiaud, pp. 81-82, in examining records for south-eastern France, states that married men were always included in the *abbés de la jeunesse*, both rural and urban. Claude Gauvard and Altan Gokalp make the same argument concerning rural charivaris. Davis, pp. 109-114, drawing on primary material from the same area, suggests that it was only urban *abbés de jeunesse* that began to include married men at the end of the fifteenth century. Grinberg, "Carnaval et société urbaine," p. 220, working from archival material from northeastern France, similarly argues that the pressure of the urban milieu resulted in married men being admitted to the societies.

[46]Davis 108. See also Gauvard and Gokalp. Grinberg, "Charivaris au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance," p. 145, also suggests that charivaris were a rite of passage that allowed men to change marital status, for example to move from being a widower to a young man, or to move from being a young man to a married man.

[47]Grinberg, "Charivaris au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance."

[48]Mahadev L. Apte, Humour and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) 171.

frequently in the records after about 1450, and appear to have been the most numerous, the most active, and the most organized and hierarchical in structure in the first half of the sixteenth century. Documentary evidence concerning the shaming ceremonies they conducted first appears in the fourteenth century, with the exception of the *chevauchées de l'âne*, which were used in Roman times and throughout the entire medieval period. The frequency of these various shaming ceremonies seems to have peaked during the latter part of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, after which they fall off somewhat and youth groups become more involved in other civic and religious responsibilities, e.g., staging plays at royal entries.[49] Whether the shaming ceremonies were practiced earlier than the fourteenth century or whether their development was prompted by certain conditions unique to the economic, social and/or political climate of the fourteenth century is a matter of some debate. As noted above, it has been suggested that youth groups evolved in response to the demographic crisis of the fourteenth century.[50] From this perspective, the shaming ceremonies these groups practiced, especially those targeting improprieties in conjugal relations, can be explained as an attempt by society to control and direct the mounting frustrations and aggression of young men unable to find spouses and served as a rite of passage for youths who had difficulty inserting themselves into a partitioned, hierarchical society. Jacques Rossiaud has suggested that the collective ceremonies performed by youth groups were in fact tempered and far less violent versions of earlier ceremonies led by disorganized groups of young men that were uncontrolled by any formal institutions whatsoever.[51] The fact that shaming ceremonies are mentioned in various court documents, municipal accounts and letters of remission only from the fourteenth century onwards is not an indication that they did not exist earlier, then, but rather reflects the attempts

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[49]The targets of these shaming ceremonies also changed over the course of time. In the fourteenth century, for instance, charivaris were directed only at widows or widowers who became betrothed, or, much less frequently, newly betrothed couples between whom there was a wide disparity in age. By the sixteenth century, and in the cities in particular, other offenders against public morals were commonly targeted as well, such as domineering wives, husbands or wives who mistreated their spouses, adulterers, women of reputed loose morals, and even offenders outside the sphere of conjugal morality: thieves, unpopular preachers, and shop-keepers or artisans who sold shoddy goods.

[50]Rinaldo Comba, "Apetitus libidinis coherceatur: Structures démographique, délits sexuels et contrôle des moeurs dans le Piémont du bas moyen-age," Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du moyen âge. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. Michel Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, Service des Publications, 1987) 65-101; Davis 139.

[51]Rossiaud 85-86.

by communal, village and ducal authorities beginning in the fourteenth century to limit violence, especially in urban settings, by institutionalizing and ritualizing its expression through the creation of formal youth groups under their control.[52]

Recently historians have also stressed the central role of shame as the major incitement leading to much criminal behavior, and have even used expressions roughly equivalent to "shame culture."[53] Crimes brought before the courts more often than not had their origins in insults given and vengeance taken. Recent historical works have also revealed that a person's reputation was often key in determining the outcome of a criminal trial, and that slights to one's reputation were vigorously pursued in the courts.[54] Shame also predominated in forums we typically associate with guilt: public penances and excommunication involved numerous forms of humiliation (e.g., humiliating processions in which the offenders, dressed only in a chemise, were subject to having their offense read out at each cross-road to all passers-by), and criminal executions were often preceded by the same humiliating processions. Many other punishments meted out by the secular courts, such as exposure in the pillory or running "la course" from one end of town to the other, naked or clothed in a chemise and vulnerable to the blows and insults of those watching, also entailed shaming the offender.[55]

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[52]Hence the right to conduct charivaris or *carnaval* ceremonies came to be formally recognized by the city governments. Beginning in the fifteenth century cities even occasionally demanded control of the fines levied at charivaris to expend on civic projects. See Grinberg, "Charivaris au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance," 142-143.

[53]See for example Claude Gauvard, "Violence citadine et réseaux de solidarité: L'exemple français aux XIVe et XVe siècles," Annales 48.5 (1993): 1113-1126; she uses the expression "une société à honneur." See also Ronald Gosselin, "Honneur et violence à Manosque (1240-1260)," Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du moyen âge. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. Michel Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, Service des Publications, 1987) 45-63; and Nicole Gonthier, Délinquance, justice et société dans le lyonnais médiéval de la fin du XIIIe siècle au début du XVIe siècle (Paris: AP éditions arguments, 1993).

[54]Gosselin 50; Lavoie, "Justice, morale et sexualité," 11-12.

[55]On public penance, see Mary Mansfield, The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth Century France (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). On the shame associated with excommunication, see Elisabeth Vodola, Excommunication in the Middle Ages (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 44-69. On public executions, see Esther Cohen, "Symbols of Culpability and the Universal Language of Justice: The Ritual of Public Executions in Late Medieval Europe," History of European Ideas 11 (1989): 407-416; and Rodrigue Lavoie, "Justice, criminalité et peine de mort en France au Moyen Age, un essai de typologie et de régionalisation," Le sentiment de la mort au Moyen Age. Acte du VIe Colloque de l'Institut médiéval de Montréal (Montreal, 1975): 31-55. On other punishments entailing shame, see Jacques Chiffoleau, Les justices du pape: Délinquance et criminalité dans la région d'Avignon au quatorzième siècle (Paris:

Overall, however, the attention which historians of the Middle Ages have devoted to shame has been slight, especially when compared to the volumes written on such topics as penance and guilt. Many historians and literary critics indeed have misinterpreted or misjudged historical or literary evidence from the Middle Ages because of a failure to appreciate the importance of shame in medieval society. A study on the ritual of public executions in late medieval Europe, for instance, ignores explicit references by contemporaries to the "open and public" and "ignominious" character of public executions, focusing instead on the ways in which public executions were designed to teach others a lesson and correct the person who is punished by forcing him to suffer a painful death like the saints.[56] Interpretations of the Song of Roland have focused on the Christian elements in the work, e.g., the conflict between the two religions, the role of Charlemagne as champion of Christianity, and the martyrdom of the knights, at the expense of ignoring the key role played by fear of shame, which is what is explicitly said to cause Roland to refrain from blowing his horn.[57] One of the fabliaux, (122) Les trois Dames de Paris[58], has been interpreted as an allegory describing the punishment due to gluttony, a parody of the tale of the three magii, a burlesque mockery of the slaughter of the innocents, and an allegory of the expulsion from earthly paradise[59] when in fact the intent of the work is to describe the humorous manner in which the three women named in the title bring shame upon

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Publications de la Sorbonne, 1984) 233-242; Comba 73-74; Gonthier 240-253; R. Grand, "Justice criminelle, procédure et peines dans les villes aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles," Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes 102 (1941): 98; Kaeuper 166; Lavoie, "Justice, morale et sexualité" 11-12; Mireille Vincent-Cassy, "Prison et châtiments à la fin du moyen-âge," Les marginaux et les exclus dans l'histoire, ed. B. Vincent, Cahier Jussieu 5 (1979) 265-266. Vincent-Cassy is one of the few historians to note that the public nature of these punishments was intended not primarily to heighten their effectiveness as deterrents, but was instead a natural expression of a society in which appearances were very important. I would argue that these public forms of punishment are in fact manifestations of a society in which shame is very important.

[56]Cohen 407-409.

[57]See the summary of various critics' views in George Fenwick Jones, "Roland's Lament – A Divergent Interpretation," Romanic Review 53.1 (1962): 3.

[58]Fabliaux cited in this study are preceded by the numbering used in the Nouveau Recueil Complet des Fabliaux, ed. Willem Noomen and Nico van den Boogard (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1983-1998), abbreviated NRCF. Unless otherwise specified, the text quoted or cited is always the *texte critique*. Citations from the *textes diplomatiques* are denoted by a manuscript letter following the line number.

[59]Roy J. Pearcy, "Realism and Religious Parody in the Fabliaux: Watriquet de Couvin's Les trois dames de Paris," Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire 50.3 (1972): 744-754.

themselves. Many of the supposedly "immoral" fabliaux in which seemingly blameless characters are the butt of cruel tricks have caused a fair degree of consternation among modern literary critics, who have sought to explain such tales as a celebration of wit.[60] The simpler and more obvious explanation is that such tales are graphic depictions -- or even celebrations -- of shaming rituals.

One of the reasons why shame in the Middle Ages has not received its due from modern scholars may lie in the fact that we ourselves are the product of a "guilt culture."[61] Inclined to interpret the past through the lenses with which we unconsciously view the present, our tendency is to see guilt (or at least religious allegory) where shame lurks instead.

Why Study Shame and Guilt in the French Fabliaux?

The French fabliaux offer a rich ground for exploring the concepts of shame and guilt in medieval society. Marie-Thérèse Lorçin in her study of the fabliaux, Façons de sentir et de penser: Les fabliaux français, has shown how the fabliaux considered as a whole may readily help disclose some of the fundamental attitudes, concerns and biases of medieval society -- in short, they can show us the picture which it had of itself.

> Les fabliaux...peuvent...contribuer à reconstituer l'image que la société du XIIIe siècle se fait d'elle-même, voire l'image qu'elle veut se donner d'elle-même.[62]

Lorçin indeed harvests from the fabliaux a wealth of material of great interest to the social

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[60]See for example Charles Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1986), ch. 4; Mary Jane Schenck, The Fabliaux: Tales of Wit and Deception, Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages 24 (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1987), especially pp. 103-108 and ch. 6; Jürgen Beyer, "The Morality of the Amoral," The Humor of the Fabliaux: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Thomas D. Cooke and Benjamin L. Honeycutt (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974): 15-42. For other examples of how medieval French literary texts have been misread through ignorance of the shame culture ethos, see the collection of essays in Rewards and Punishments in the Arthurian Romances and Lyric Poetry of Medieval France, ed. Peter V. Davies and Angus J. Kennedy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987); and Jean-Charles Payen, Le motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale (Geneva: Droz, 1967).

[61]See above, n. 1. Note that it is only North American society that has been identified as a guilt culture. Traditional Mediterranean society has been identified as a shame culture. Where this leaves European medievalists is not clear.

[62]Marie-Thérèse Lorçin, Façons de sentir et de penser: Les fabliaux français (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1979) 3.

historian, such as the perception of the various stages of life, views of the virtues and vices, and common beliefs regarding marriage, sex, women and the clergy. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the fabliaux may also be a rich source of information on the concepts of shame and guilt. While many scholars have questioned the use of the fabliaux as an historical source, rightly fearing that the fabliaux's tendency to incorporate realistic details from everyday life can mislead scholars to confuse literary artifice and historical reality,[63] still others have shown how historical data can be bountifully harvested from the fabliaux if one appreciates the literary constraints imposed by genre and plot and employs data from historical sources as a check on literary interpretation.[64] While the humor of the fabliaux can present an additional obstacle to interpretation,[65] it is a humor based on stereotypes, stereotypes which can help reveal the fundamental preoccupations of medieval society.[66] If one understands a particular society's jokes, so it is said, one understands that society. Like modern urban legends, suggests Grace Neville, the fabliaux disclose basic fears and obsessions and make fun of the things that most frighten people.[67]

Although the fabliaux rarely contain the long interior monologues found in the French

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[63]See especially Philippe Ménard, Les fabliaux: Contes à rire du moyen âge, Littératures modernes 32 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983) 106.

[64]See most notably Lorçin; and also Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux. See also Paul Bancourt, "Vol puni, vol impuni dans les fabliaux. Contribution à l'étude des rapports de la littérature et de la société au XIIIe siècle," La justice au Moyen-Age (Sanction ou impunité?). Colloque du CUERMA à Aix-en-Provence, mars '85, Senefiance 16 (Univ. de Provence: Publications du CUERMA. Marseille: Éds. Jeanne Lafitte, 1986) 36 ff. Bancourt observes that comparison to actual historical sources can help prevent misreadings of the fabliaux. When using the fabliaux as an historical source, what can be especially revealing are those instances in which, at the cost of brevity and comic force, the *conteur* reveals his views or feelings.

[65]It was of course Joseph Bédier in Les fabliaux, études de littérature populaire et d'histoire littéraire du Moyen Age (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1893) who first insisted that humor was the defining characteristic of all fabliaux. The risk in any study of the fabliaux is to ignore their primary purpose, to amuse. The humor in at least some fabliaux is purely cognitive in nature, based on the pleasure derived from the perception of incongruities, and should not be interpreted as an expression of social aggression or tension. See Schenck, The Fabliaux, p. xii and ch. 5. Cf. Apte, p. 129, who warns that, "a common danger in any textual analysis is reading too much into the text."

[66]Lorçin 3; Thomas D. Cooke, The Old French and Chaucerian Fabliaux: A Study of Their Comic Climax (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978); Rosanna Brusegan, "Le personnage comme paradigme de traits dans les fabliaux," Cahier d'études médiévales 2-3 (1984): 157-167.

[67]Grace Neville, "Medieval French Fabliaux and Modern Urban Legends: The Attraction of Opposites," Béaloideas: The Journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society, 57 (1989): 133-149.

romances, the fabliau *conteur* is usually careful to delineate through the use of dialogue the forces which motivate his characters.[68] According to my estimates, shame and guilt are in fact mentioned in well over 600 instances in the fabliaux taken as a whole.[69]

The date and authorship of the fabliaux make them well-suited as a vehicle for exploring questions of shame and guilt. The existing corpus (comprised of 127 fabliaux, according to the editors of the new standard collected edition, the Nouveau Recueil Complet des Fabliaux)[70] was composed by approximately 75 different authors,[71] meaning that the results of any study using the entire corpus will not be skewed by the particular biases or eccentricities of one or two authors. Very few of the fabliaux have analogues in exempla literature and the Latin *comedia*;[72] hence they can be studied as an historical source in their own right. The fabliaux were composed during the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century, but most lack a more precise date. While this means that tracing changes in the presentation of shame and guilt in the fabliaux over the course of time will not be possible and necessitates for the most part that the fabliaux be studied as a block,[73] still their date of composition is attractive in that it falls after the supposedly fundamental shifts in culture that occurred in the twelfth century.

The "low" style of the fabliaux constitutes yet another advantage for this study. Their ribald tone, their realism and the materialistic values they espouse have frequently caused the

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[68]Evelyn Vitz, "Desire and Causality in Medieval Narrative," Romanic Review, 71 (1980): 213-243. Vitz notes that the desires which motivate a character often play a key role in medieval narrative. She uses the fabliau (74) Le Sacristain to illustrate her point. On the use of dialogue see also Cooke 51-63; and Per Nykrog, Les fabliaux: Etude d'histoire littéraire et de stylistique médiévale (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1957), 152-154.

[69]I have defined an "instance" or "occurrence" of shame or guilt as a specific *situation* in a fabliau which gives rise to shame or guilt as defined later in this chapter. For example, if a wife at one point in a fabliau expresses shame over her adultery and the *conteur* later in the same fabliau states that she feels shame, it is regarded as one "occurrence" of shame, for the shame situation, the wife's adultery, has given rise to her shame. However, if the wife is described as feeling ashamed over her adultery at one point in the fabliau and is later publicly humiliated for her adultery, it is regarded as two "occurrences" of shame, for two different *situations* have given rise to her shame: her adultery in the first case and the public humiliation she suffers in the second.

[70]Noomen and van den Boogaard, NRCF.

[71]Nykrog, ch. 1.

[72]Nykrog xlviii ff.; Schenck, The Fabliaux 9, 25.

[73]Ménard 11.

fabliaux to be designated "popular" literature, addressed to and enjoyed primarily by the bourgeoisie and those on the lower rungs of the social ladder. While the question of whether or not the fabliaux were indeed explicitly written for the bourgeoisie is still open to debate, there is little doubt that the fabliaux were written in a lower style than the courtly romances, a literature of (and, it is often assumed, primarily for) the nobility.[74] Modern scholarship on shame and guilt in the Middle Ages, as we have just seen, has been based almost exclusively on this more elite literature. Studying shame and guilt in the fabliaux may thus help indicate whether the guilt found to be so prevalent in the romances is due simply to the romance genre itself, or whether it is truly reflective of larger trends in medieval western European society as a whole.

Although obviously quite secular in tone, the fabliaux were not entirely disconnected from the world of religion. Many of the fabliau *conteurs* were clerics; indeed the privileged role which clerics play in the fabliaux has been ascribed to their largely clerical authorship.[75] In England many preachers even used fabliaux as *exempla* to illustrate their sermons and to hold their audience's attention, although the practice of embellishing sermons with amusing anecdotes and stories was not without its ecclesiastical critics.[76] Secular in tone but religious in many ways, the fabliaux thus constitute an intriguing body of literature for studying evidence of sanctions which some scholars have linked exclusively to either a religious or a secular world view.

Thus far, the fabliaux have not been studied from the viewpoint of shame and guilt

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[74]See in particular Bédier; Nykrog; and Jean Rychner, Contribution à l'étude des fabliaux, 2 vols. (Geneva: Droz, 1960). See also Charles Muscatine, "The Social Background of the Old French Fabliaux," Genre 9.1 (1976): 1-19; Ménard 96-107; and Arié Serper, "Le monde culturel des fabliaux et la réalité sociale," Third International Beast Epic, Fable and Fabliau Colloquium, Münster 1979, Proceedings, ed. Jan Goossens and Timothy Sodmann (Münster: Böhlau Verlag Köln Wien, 1981) 393-403.

[75]Ménard 91-92; Krystyna Kasprzyk, "Pour la sociologie du fabliau: Convention, tactique et engagement," Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny 23 (1976): 157-159; Serper 401; Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux, ch. 1. Muscatine notes, "The more we appreciate the sophisticated and learned elements in [the fabliaux's] background and composition, the more we must impute to them an authorship involving clerks."

[76]Siegfried Wenzel, "The Joyous Art of Preaching: Or, the Preacher and the Fabliaux," Anglia 97:1-4 (1979): 304-325; see also the same author's "Vices, Virtues, and Popular Preaching," Medieval and Renaissance Studies 6 (1976): 28-54. In the latter article, one popular fourteenth century English preacher's manual actually includes the outlines of the fabliaux (111)Le Testament de l'Asne. See also Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, "Clercs et jongleurs dans la société médiévale (XIIe et XIIIe siècles)" Annales E.S.C. 34.5 (1979): 913-928.

cultures. Themes related to guilt, however, such as repentance, religious parody, and judgement, have been the subject of some studies. Jean-Charles Payen in his monumental Le motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale cites one fabliau, (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, demonstrating how it shows that penance had become increasingly formalist.[77] Religious parody and allegory in the fabliaux have been the subject of some limited discussion. Scholars have shown that characters in the fabliaux twist religious beliefs not to make fun of them but to serve their own ends. For instance, in (86) L'Oue au Chapelain a cleric smears some fat from a goose on the mouth of a statue of Christ on a crucifix in order to explain to his superior why the food he was supposed to be safeguarding for him has disappeared; in fact, he has eaten the goose himself. In (48) L'Enfant qui fu remis au Soleil, a woman who conceives a child while her merchant husband is away for two years explains to her husband on his return that she was grieving over his absence one day while it was snowing. She caught some snow in her mouth, and from its sweetness, she explains, she conceived the child. Her intent is clearly not to parody the virgin birth, but to use it as a way to excuse her infidelity.[78]

Scholars examining the theme of judgement in the fabliaux stress that the judge in such works is generally corrupt and that justice is never done.[79] The judges take the advice of the court fool and "habitually rule against plaintiffs and exonerate the accused."[80] The poor and weak are taken advantage of and the powerful use the courts to further their own ends. Appeals for judgement from the fabliaux audience appear to be invitations for dialogue with the audience or appeals for other fabliaux to be related. Along with the corrupt judges, such appeals seem to underline the fact that justice in the fabliaux is a justice of this world.[81] The only justice that

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[77]Payen 548-549. According to Payen, the woman in this fabliau does not appear truly contrite, and the husband, by disguising himself as a monk in order to hear her confession, shows that the sacrament had lost its gravity.

[78]Pearcy 744-754; Nykrog 104.

[79]Brent A. Pitts, "Unfinished Business: Character Conflict, Judgment Scenes, and Narrator-Audience Dialogue in the Old French Fabliaux," Medioevo Romanzo 11 (1986): 379-400; Schenck, The Fabliaux 33, 80. Cf. Elisabeth Charbonnier, "Le thème du jugement dans la fable et quelques avant-textes du Roman de Renart," La justice au Moyen-Age (Sanction ou impunité?). Colloque du CUERMA à Aix-en-Provence, mars '85, Senefiance 16 (Univ. de Provence: Publications du CUERMA. Marseille: Eds. Jeanne Lafitte, 1986) 111-123.

[80]Pitts, "Unfinished Business" 389.

[81]Pitts, "Unfinished Business;" Schenck, The Fabliaux 33, 80.

appears to be operative is what we would call "poetic justice," in which the bad (or, what literary scholars have argued is the same thing in the world of the fabliaux, the stupid) immediately receive their just desserts.[82] Paul Bancourt in his examination of theft provides several good examples. He notes that whether or not a thief is ultimately punished for his actions does not depend on his objective guilt, but depends on who in the story is showing largesse and who is avaricious and/or stupid. The generous person, whether the thief or the victim, comes out on top, and the stingy or stupid person, whether the thief or the victim, is the loser.[83] To my knowledge, no other scholars have examined issues pertaining to guilt, and none at all touch on the subject of shame in the fabliaux.

Sources

For this study, I examine all of the fabliaux appearing in the Nouveau Recueil Complet des Fabliaux (NRCF), the new collected edition of the extant fabliaux. Although there is some disagreement in the case of a handful of fabliaux, most scholars appear to have accepted the judgement of the editors.[84] Throughout this study I use the fabliaux numbers and titles as given in the NRCF.

Definitions of Shame and Guilt

Before proceeding to examine shame and guilt in the fabliaux, it is important first to define precisely what we mean by shame and guilt. The modern scholars who have written on shame and guilt in the Middle Ages have, for the most part, followed outdated definitions

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[82]Schenck, The Fabliaux 37-38; Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux 93.

[83]Bancourt 25-41.

[84]For the selection criteria, see Nico van den Boogard, "Le Nouveau Recueil Complet des Fabliaux," Neophilologus 71 (1977): 333-346. For a critique of their selections, see Schenck, The Fabliaux, ch. 3, and Élisabeth Schulze-Busacker, "La moralité des fabliaux. Considérations stylistiques," Cahiers d'études médiévales 2-3 (1984): 526. Without directly assailing the selection criteria used by the editors of the NRCF, Muscatine in The Old French Fabliaux makes frequent reference to the Lai d'Aristote. The other fabliaux not included in the NRCF which some scholars indicate should have been are: Le Prestre qui fu mis au Lardier; Le Roi d'Angleterre et le Jongleur d'Ely; Le Pré tondu and Dame Joenne; Le Prestre pelé; and L'Espervier.

proposed by anthropologists from the 1930s and 1940s.[85] According to these outdated definitions, shame is an externally imposed sanction and guilt is an internally imposed sanction. In a shame culture, the opinion of others, or "what people will say," is more important than what the individual personally feels. In a guilt culture, in contrast, people act according to an internal sense of what is right and wrong. Thus Vance defines a shame culture as one in which respect for public opinion and the desire to obtain honor are the most important forces guiding behavior, while in a guilt culture the fear of God and a desire for a quiet conscience are the stronger factors.[86] Szövérffy similarly defines a shame culture as one in which people are preoccupied with increasing their honor and reputation while in a guilt culture, "exemplified by the Judaeo-Christian outlook and moral tradition," the fear of sin plays the predominant role.[87] Bloch likewise defines a shame culture as one in which the individual is externally oriented, acting more according to the opinion of others than according to what he or she personally feels, and a guilt culture as one in which the individual acts according to an internal sense of what is right and wrong. Guilt, he says, is "negative interiority."[88] So too Brewer defines honor as being dependent on "what people will say," while he sees guilt, at least in our society, as contingent upon an "internalized set of values."[89] Lambert follows Brewer in using this same distinction, defining a shame culture as one in which "public recognition of one's actions" matters more than the person's inner recognition of what he or she has done, and a guilt culture as one in which "internal sanctions matter more than external sanctions.[90] Wasserman, while not explicitly referring to the shame culture/guilt culture distinction, likewise defines an honor/shame culture as one in which public opinion is the measure of all worth; she refers to guilt as the "inward

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[85]Ruth Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946) 222-224; Margaret Mead, ed., Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1937), esp. 493-505; Dorothea Leighton and Clyde Kluckhon, Children of the People: The Navaho Individual and His Development (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947) 106, 170-171. Also frequently cited is Pitt-Rivers.

[86]Vance 36.

[87]Szövérffy 87, 92-93.

[88]Bloch, "Tristan, the Myth of the State" 70; and Medieval French Literature and Law, 243-246

[89]Brewer 29, 32.

[90]Lambert 179, 181.

feeling of shame."[91] Only Williams and Burrow (who draws heavily on anthropological literature) distinguish shame and guilt based not on an external/internal basis, but along the lines suggested by the more recent writings of anthropologists and psychologists.

Indeed, a wide range of anthropological and psychological writings since the 1960s have challenged the use of the internal/external distinction as the basis for differentiating shame and guilt and identified other characteristics which can more meaningfully distinguish the two. Shame is not necessarily external nor guilt necessarily internal. It is possible for an individual to feel shame even if no one witnesses the shameful act. An Ojibway Indian who breaks his paddle while alone in his canoe, for instance, may experience such shame that he will commit suicide, even though no one sees the event. Likewise an individual may feel guilty only when told by others that he or she has done wrong. A small child, for example, will often not feel guilt over a misdeed unless reprimanded by his or her parents.[92] In addition, shame seems actually to require some degree of internalization in order to function adequately as a social sanction. Without an internal sense of what constitutes shameful behavior, people would never try to avoid those acts considered shameful.[93] So too guilt seems to require some degree of externalization, at least initially, for it is only by means of external sanctions such as spankings and scoldings that a child gradually comes to internalize the behavioral norms which, when violated later, give rise to guilt.[94] In short, shame and guilt both require some degree of internalization and externalization

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[91]Wasserman 78-79, 89. Dodds and Adkins likewise make use of the external/internal distinction as the basis of their definitions of shame and guilt. Dodds defines a shame culture as one in which honor or public esteem is the highest good and respect for public opinion determines a person's course of action, while in a guilt culture he sees "the enjoyment of a quiet conscience" as the chief goal for the individual and the fear of angering the gods as the strongest sanction (pp. 17-18). Adkins likewise defines a shame culture as one in which the strongest sanction is "what people will say" (p. 12 n. 1).

[92]Piers and Singer 63-70, 96-97; David P. Ausbel, "Relationships Between Shame and Guilt in the Socializing Process," Psychological Review 62.5 (1955): 380-381, 383, 389; Pitt-Rivers, "Honor and Social Status" 27; Susan Miller, The Shame Experience (Analytic Press, 1985) 32; Sidney Levin, "Some Metapsychological Considerations on the Differentiation Between Shame and Guilt," International Journal of Psychoanalysis 48 (1967): 269.

[93]Leon Wurmser, The Mask of Shame (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981) 72-73; Takie Sugiyama Lebra, "The Social Mechanism of Guilt and Shame: The Japanese Case," Anthropological Quarterly 44 (1971): 241-242; Creighton 282; A.L. Epstein, The Experience of Shame in Melanesia: An Essay in the Anthropology of Affect (London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1984) 33, 47-48; Piers and Singer 28-29; Helen Merrell Lynd, On Shame and the Search for Identity (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1958) 27-32.

[94]Ausbel 380-381, 383, 389.

in order to function effectively as sanctions. In at least one East Asian culture, shame is predominantly an internal sanction and feelings of guilt are associated only with external threats of punishment.[95] Clearly the internal/external distinction is an unsound basis for distinguishing shame and guilt. It is no longer accepted by social scientists.

Shame as a feeling is now generally held to be that feeling of negative self-evaluation which occurs when a person realizes that he or she has failed to live up to his or her ideals. Psychoanalysts speak of this as a failure vis-à-vis the ego-ideal, the internalized positive image of the parent figure,[96] while anthropologists speak of it as a failure to live up to the internalized standards of society.[97] The difference here between the two disciplines appears to be a semantic one only; both definitions refer to the failure to attain one's goals, the failure to be the person one aspires to be, or thinks that one is. To put it in simple terms, the person undergoing the experience of shame thinks, "I am not as good, strong, etc. as I was, or as I should be." The person feels a lesser human being as a result; he or she experiences a decline in his or her perceived status.

Although the feeling of shame is essentially internal insofar as it consists of the person's inner recognition of having failed to attain his or her own goals, shame has an external component as well. The goals whose unattainability bring on shame are originally derived from external sources: the person's parents, peers, or even society as a whole.[98] Moreover, and more importantly, the person suffering shame usually feels that the esteem in which these others hold

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[95]Cited by Creighton 282.

[96]Alexander 44, 47; Ausbel 382; Creighton 287; Benjamin Kilborne, "Fields of Shame: Anthropologists Abroad," Ethos 20.2 (1992): 231-232; Levin 268-269, 271; Helen B. Lewis, Shame and Guilt in Neurosis (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1971) 23, 82-84; Miller 16-20, 31-32, 167; Piers and Singer 23-30; Kurt Riezler, "Comment on the Social Psychology of Shame," The American Journal of Sociology 48.4 (1943): 458-460; Helm Stierlin, "Shame and Guilt in Family Relations: Theoretical and Clinical Aspects," Archives of General Psychiatry 30 (1974): 381; Wurmser 72-82. Shame is said to arise during the pre-oedipal or bonding stage of child development. (See especially Creighton 299-300, and Piers and Singer, ch. 8.) Because of its derivation from a failure to obtain one's own ideals, shame is frequently said to be closely linked to narcissism and to involve the whole self in a way that guilt, focused on the commission of an act external to the self, does not. (See Williams 92-93 and 219-223, and Kilborne 231ff.)

[97]Epstein 11, 18-22, 39-40, 49; Lebra 246-250; Lynd 23-24, 34-43, 208-209; Peristiany 9-10; Pitt-Rivers 21-22, 73; A.J. Strathern, "Why is Shame On the Skin?" The Anthropology of the Body, ed. John Blacking (London: Academic Press, 1977)100-101, 104-105.

[98]Epstein 38-39; Levin 270-271; Lewis 20-21, 40-41; Piers and Singer 26-27, 53; Riezler 458; Wurmser 72.

him or her will decline as a result of the shameful act.[99] In more abstract terms, the person fears that his or her status in the eyes of the valued "Other" will decline because he or she has failed to live up to the "Other's" goals. The boy who has incorporated the ideals of his parents may fear that his parents will scorn or reject him if he fails in school. It may of course be the case that the ideals of the "Other" have been so internalized that the person does not even associate them with the "Other", and instead considers them uniquely his or her own; in such instances the person may experience a decline in status solely in his or her own eyes. Still, insofar as status is in essence one's position in society in relation to others. the sense of a scornful "Other" remains implicit.

Although it results from falling short of one's goals, shame does not perforce indicate responsibility. The person who experiences shame is not necessarily responsible for his or her downfall.[100] A physically handicapped person may feel ashamed of a physical deformity over which he or she has no control; a student may feel ashamed of a low I.Q. A person can feel ashamed regardless of whether or not he or she is actually responsible.

In brief, then, the feeling of shame is the negative self-evaluation which results from the failure to realize one's goals, goals which were originally received from one's valued "Other". A decline in status, whether in one's own eyes or in the eyes of the "Other", is the essence of the feeling of shame; the issue of responsibility is irrelevant.

Let us now turn to the definition of guilt. Contrary to what we might have expected from the external/internal distinction formerly used as the basis of the definitions of shame and guilt, guilt is now commonly believed to be not the opposite of shame, but a wholly different experience altogether. It is not at the opposite end of the continuum, but on an entirely different axis.[101] The essence of the feeling of guilt lies in the recognition that one has done something wrong. Psychoanalysts refer to this as the recognition of having violated the code of conduct prescribed by the superego, the internalized, threatening, castrating parental figure;[102]

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[99]See esp. Miller 32-33, 167; see also Kilborne 231-232, 239-240; Lebra 248-250; Levin 268-269; Lewis 23-24, 32-33, 40-42, 64, 84, 87; Lynd 24; Riezler 458; Strathern 101; Wurmser 72-75, 77-78.

[100]H. Ian Hogbin, "Shame: A Study of Social Conformity in a New Guinea Village,"Oceania 17 (1947): 274; Lewis 84; Lynd 32-33, 208-209; Miller 47-48.

[101]See esp. Lynd 23, 208.

[102]Alexander 42-44; Levin 273, 274; Lewis 23, 76-78, 81-88; Lynd 21-23, 25, 49-51, 207-209; Miller 46-48; Piers and Singer 15-17, 23-24, 29; Stierlin 381-382; Wurmser 72-75, 77. Guilt is said

anthropologists speak instead of the realization that one has contravened the behavioral norms prescribed by society.[103] Psychoanalysts and anthropologists are again describing essentially the same experience: the recognition of having violated the accepted rules of conduct. In simple terms, the guilty person thinks, "I have done wrong."

Like shame, guilt is essentially an internal experience.[104] The guilty person recognizes within his or her own mind that a wrongful act has been committed. However, again as with shame, there is also an external component. The rules of conduct whose violation leads to the experience of guilt are originally acquired during the process of socialization from others: one's parents, peers, or society in general.[105] More importantly, guilt has an external component also in that when the guilty person commits the misdeed, he or she injures some "Other" or in some way oversteps his or her rights vis-à-vis the "Other."[106] Most often the "Other" is the specific person who has been wronged by the misdeed; the "Other" may also be other people or entities whom the guilty person feels he or she has offended, such as one's parents, one's community, or one's God. Thus the thief who burglarizes a house may feel guilt over the harm done to the inhabitants or to his community; a young boy who disobeys his parents may feel guilty over having disobeyed the biblical injunction to honor his parents, or for having caused his parents grief. Because of this injustice done to the "Other", the guilty person's relationship with the "Other" is disturbed; some steps therefore need to be taken to re-establish a normal relationship. Often this is accomplished by the punishment of the guilty person, either by the "Other" or through the agency of people acting on behalf of the "Other." The burglar is punished by society, which administers a prison term, and the disobedient child receives a scolding from his parents. A normal relationship with the "Other" may also be restored if the guilty person propitiates or makes amends to the "Other." The murderer in Teutonic society made payments to the family of the victim, the disobedient child buys his parents a gift, and the sinner does penance. Guilt thus revolves around the notion of balance in relationships. When a misdeed is

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to arise during the oedipal stage of child development. (See esp. Creighton 299-300, and Piers and Singer, ch. 8.)

[103]Ausbel 378-381; Creighton 287; Lebra 243-246; Piers and Singer 85-95, esp. 86-87.

[104]Alexander 41-42; Ausbel 379; Lewis 18-19, 23, 32, 82; Levin 273.

[105]Ausbel 379-381; Lewis 20-21; Lynd 21; Piers and Singer 53.

[106]See esp. Lebra 243-246; see also Alexander 42-44; Ausbel 383; Kilborne 231-232; Lynd 23, 50, 209; Miller 47; Piers and Singer 16-17, 29, 45; Stierlin 381-382.

committed, the guilty person is out of balance in his or her relations with the "Other". To restore this balance, the guilty person must subsequently be punished or must make amends.

Unlike shame, guilt always implies responsibility.[107] Whether or not truly responsible for the wrongful act, the person feeling guilty always feels responsible. A widow grieving over her deceased spouse, for example, may not actually be responsible for his death, but she may still experience guilt if she feels she is in some way responsible. Indeed, because guilt always arises from some specific act, and hence always involves some degree of choice on the part of the doer, guilt necessarily implies responsibility. As the "I" in the statement "I have done wrong," the person feeling guilty by definition feels responsible.

In brief, then, the feeling of guilt arises from the recognition that one has done something wrong. In committing this wrong, the guilty person harms some "Other" or in some way oversteps his or her rights vis-à-vis this "Other." The guilty person must then make amends or be punished to re-establish a normal relation with the "Other." The guilty person is always responsible for the misdeed, or at least always feels responsible. Guilt thus contrasts sharply with shame, which, as we have seen, centres instead on the recognition that one has failed to attain one's ideals. Shame involves not offending the "Other," but suffering a decline in one's status vis-à-vis the "Other." Shame does not necessarily imply responsibility.

In practice, shame and guilt are not always so easy to distinguish as their definitions might seem to imply. Until recently shame was studied by social scientists far less than guilt partially because of the confusion between the two.[108] The reason for this confusion seems to be due to "moral shame", that special type of shame that arises when a person feels ashamed of some transgression. As transgressions are also what give rise to guilt, moral shame and guilt are easily confused. It is still possible to distinguish the two, though.[109] If the person who has committed the misdeed is concerned with how the act reflects on his or her own person, the emotion in question is shame. If the person is instead concerned with the act itself, with how it will affect others, and with how it may be amended, then the emotion is guilt. In short, the feeling of shame focuses on the self while guilt focuses on the act. For example, suppose a man robs a bank and later feels some regrets. If he reflects on what others will think of him, or if he

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[107]Lewis 29, 43, 84; Lynd 34; Miller 47-48. Cf. Williams 92, who terms "irrational guilt" the guilt an individual experiences when he or she has involuntarily harmed others.

[108]Lewis, 21, 35; Miller, 47, 140.

[109]Ausbel 382-383; Lebra 246-247; Lewis 35-39; Miller 47-48, 140-142.

feels that he is a lesser person because of the crime, the emotion he is feeling is shame. If, however, he is thinking about the crime itself, how it was an unjust act, or how it may have affected others, the emotion he is experiencing is guilt. The man may of course feel both these emotions at once or may alternate rapidly between the two feeling states. Nevertheless the two emotions are distinct.

It is important to emphasize that shame and guilt are by no means mutually exclusive.[110] It is not at all unusual for a person to experience both shame and guilt in response to a given situation, or for the same person to experience shame in response to one situation and guilt in response to another. However, most people do tend to experience one emotion more frequently than the other; thus some people may be classified as "shame prone" while others are regarded as "guilt prone." No one consistently experiences one emotion to the total exclusion of the other; to do so is believed to be maladaptive behavior.

It is also important to note that shame and guilt are more than just emotions. While most social scientists and especially psychologists have focused on shame and guilt as emotions, anthropologists have also stressed their importance as sanctions controlling behavior. Anthropologist A.L. Epstein makes a clear distinction between the emotion and the sanction of shame.[111] As a sanction, shame can be a punishment (after the shameful act has been committed or recognized) or a deterrent (before the act has been committed or recognized). The punishment may entail nothing more than the feeling of shame, or may involve other punishments ranging from ostracism to highly ritualized shaming ceremonies. The feeling may arise only after the sanction is brought to bear, if shame for the person is an externalized sanction and no shame is felt until others are aware of the failing, or the feeling may arise as soon as the person is aware of having transgressed the dictates of shame.[112] Shame can also be a state into which others consider the shamed person to have fallen, without the individual himself feeling shamed.[113] I suggest that the same distinctions can be applied to the experience of guilt. As a sanction, guilt can entail a punishment (i.e. the actual punishment meted out for a misdeed) or act as a deterrent.

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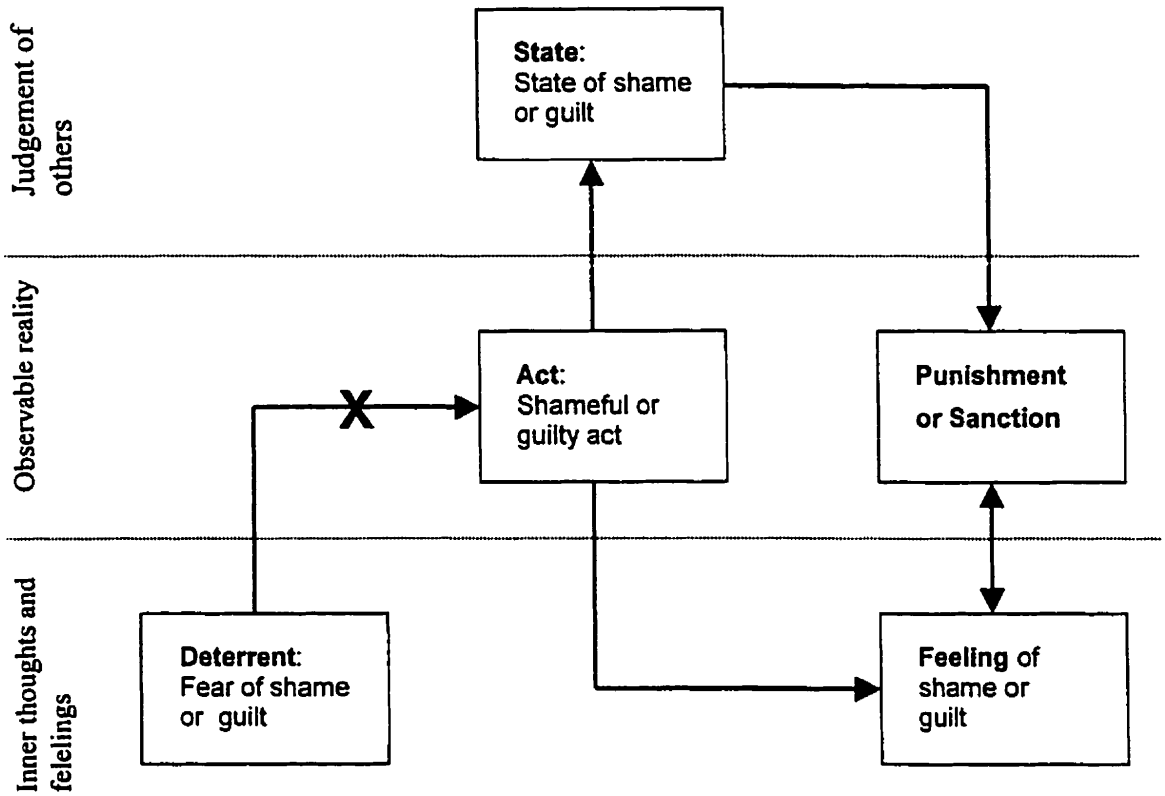
[110]Creighton 291-292; Levin 271; Lewis 7, 29, 83; Lynd 208, 236-237; Miller 142-145; Piers and Singer 44-45, 53.

[111]Epstein, esp. 19, 27, 40.

[112]Strathern 99-110; Hogbin 272-274, 283-284.

[113]Strathern 99-110; Hogbin 273-274, 283-284. Williams, 219-223, also distinguishes the feelings from what he terms the "mechanisms" or "conceptions" of shame and guilt.

Figure 1: Forms of Shame and Guilt



The feeling of guilt may be the whole of the punishment, but other more concrete forms of punishment may also be brought to bear. A person can be considered by others to be guilty without the guilty individual actually having any feelings of guilt. A person may feel guilty with the awareness that a transgression has been committed, or a person may feel guilty only when punished, the feeling prompted by the punishment. These distinctions are illustrated in Figure 1.[114]

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[114]Yvonne Robreau, L'honneur et la honte: Leur expression dans les romans en prose du Lancelot-Graal (XII – XIIIe siècles) (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1981), p. 119, makes a similar distinction. She distinguishes between the 1) feeling of shame; 2) the state of dishonor (what I term the "state" of shame; 3) humiliating misadventures, and 4) humiliating offenses (i.e., insults to one's honor). The latter two I discuss as either sanctions (if the person insulted or humiliated has done something to merit the shame) or as shameful acts (if the person who casts the insult thereby brings shame upon herself or himself). Robreau, p. 147, notes the importance of distinguishing the person who is considered shamed because he has been offended by another, and the person who is dishonored through his own actions. As is discussed in Chapter 3, reacting with anger to an offense and taking

To fully appreciate shame and guilt in the medieval context, it is important to understand that societies, like people, are neither exclusively shame-prone nor guilt-prone; there is no such thing as a pure shame culture or guilt culture.[115] Normally societies make use of both shame and guilt as social sanctions; which sanction is called into play in any given situation usually depends on the cultural context: the nature of the offense, whether there is some ambiguity regarding the appropriate behavioral norm, the social status of the persons concerned, the relationship between the parties concerned, whether the setting is rural or urban, and so forth. Most societies do rely on one sanction more than the other, though. This "favored" sanction is closely integrated with many other components of the culture, e.g., child-rearing practices, the mental view of human nature, accepted ways of managing disputes, the structure of authority, and the extent to which group behavior is valued as opposed to independence and individuality.[116] Some anthropologists argue that determining the interrelationship between each sanction and other components of the culture is more important than deciding whether a culture is a shame culture or a guilt culture. In the words of anthropologist Millie Creighton,

> More relevant than differentiating between guilt and shame is the possibility that the relative presence or absence of either sanction may be related to variations in world view, cultural values, or mechanisms of social control.[117]

Within a particular society, anthropologists note, shame is not a static, universally applicable sanction or deterrent.[118] Shame may not mean the same thing to all the classes in a particular society or even to all individuals within a given class. What is shameful to the nobility may be impossible to avoid for the peasants, who may therefore have different goals and

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vengeance against the offender shows that the humiliation is not deserved and protects the victim from shame.

[115]Ausbel 378-379, 382, 386-387, 389; Creighton 303; Epstein 46-47; Hogbin 282; Lebra 242; Anthony J. Marsella, Michael D. Murray and Charles Golden, "Ethnic Variations in the Phenomenology of Emotions: Shame," Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology 5.3 (1974): 323; Peristiany 10-11; Piers and Singer 85, 99; Riezler 457; Strathern 109.

[116]Creighton 293 ff.; Epstein 17-18, 44, 47-49.

[117]Creighton 302.

[118]Rosemary J. Coombe, "Barren Ground: Re-Conceiving Honor and Shame in the Field of Mediterranean Ethnography," Anthropologica 32 (1990): 221-238. See also Alison Lever, "Honor as a Red Herring," Cultural Anthropology 6.3 (1991): 83-106; and C.A. Valentine, "Men of Anger and Men of Shame: Lakalai Ethnopsychology and Its Implications for Sociopsychological Theory," Ethnology 2 (1963): 441-477.

different sanctions based on different value systems. Of special interest to historians, what is considered shameful also may change over the course of time, either as a result of the value systems of the subordinate groups assuming more importance, and/or due to other social and economic changes. Shame as a deterrent or sanction should therefore be viewed not in a legalistic sense as a static code dictating what should and should not be done, but as one of many available and constantly evolving symbols that people can choose from to guide their own actions and their interpretation of the actions of others. While to my knowledge no anthropologists have spoken of guilt in similar terms, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that guilt as a sanction or deterrent should also be viewed as a polyvalent symbol capable of changing over the course of time, selected by individuals among the many symbols available to them as a guide to action and interpretation.

My goal in examining shame and guilt in the fabliaux is to understand what shame and guilt meant as "polyvalent symbols". In what situations was one or the other called into play? Did they represent competing value systems? What was the relationship between the two? This question is of special interest given the apparent overlap between shame and guilt that existed in medieval society. As noted above, shame was a predominant feature in penance, both private and public, and in criminal punishments. In the exercise of vengeance, shame and guilt both played a critical role. The act of taking vengeance restored the balance between the offended party and the perpetrator, hence fitting the definition of guilt. At the same time, if the offended person did not exact vengeance, it diminished his or her status in society and was a cause for shame. In De vera et falsa poenitentia, a theological work on penance dating from the second half of the eleventh century and enjoying a wide influence due to its mistaken attribution to St. Augustine, acts of penance are identified with vengeance:

> Properly speaking, punishment (*poena*) is a hurt (*laesio*) which punishes and avenges (*vindicat*) what one commits....Penance (*poenitentia*) is therefore an avenging (*vindicatio*), always punishing in oneself what he is sorry to have done.[119]

St. Anselm's explanation of the Incarnation in Cur Deus homo (ca. 1095-1098) similarly mixes concepts of shame and guilt by using feudal vocabulary to describe man's relationship with God. Anselm states that when Adam sinned, he offended God's honor. As a result, mankind must make satisfaction for dishonoring God: "It is necessary, then, either that the honor taken away

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[119]Quoted from Berman 172. Cf. St. Augustine in De libera arbitro: "In order that the beauty of the universe not remain soiled, the disgrace of the crime must not remain without the beauty of vengeance." (Quoted from Delumeau 194).

should be repaid or that punishment should follow."[120] Hence appreciating the relationship between shame and guilt will be a central goal of this study.

Method

Most critical to an examination of shame and guilt in the medieval French fabliaux is a study of the vocabulary used to express the concepts of shame and guilt. The meaning of words varies over time, and the terms which express an emotion in one language often do not correspond directly to similar terms in another.[121] Hence I will begin with a detailed study of the groups or families of words which express the concepts of shame and guilt, and the web of relationships that connect these various groups. Yvonne Robreau has examined the vocabulary of honor and shame in the romances of the Lancelot-Grail cycles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[122] Brother Leo Charles Yedlicka has written a detailed study of the vocabulary of repentance and remorse in French moral, didactic and penitential literature of the eleventh through fifteenth centuries.[123] To my knowledge, however, no scholar has attempted a comparison of the vocabulary used to express shame and guilt, and no one has examined the vocabulary used to express these concepts in the fabliaux. A comparison with the vocabulary of shame and guilt used in other sources, such as Latin penitential or exemplum literature, would obviously have been interesting, but considerations of scope restrict me to comparing the terminology used in the fabliaux only with the terminology described in secondary sources such

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[120]Quote cited in Walter H. Principe, Introduction to Patristic and Medieval Theology (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1982) 188. See Franciscus S.Schmitt, Introduction, Sancti Anselmi Opera Omnia, 6 vols. (Rome and Edinburgh: Seccovii, 1968); and Berman 177-178. Berman suggests that Anselm saw Christ's sacrifice on the cross as a kind of self-abasement or work of contrition similar to the self-abasement a serf might demonstrate if he has offended the honor of his lord. In my mind, this raises the interesting possibility that the contritionist movement of the tenth through twelfth centuries was not so much an expression of guilt as a species of self-abasement that should be understood in the context of a shame culture.

[121]Epstein 8; Riezler 457; F.R.P. Akehurst, "La folie chez les troubadours," Mélanges de philologie romane offerts à Charles Camproux (Montpellier: Université Paul-Valéry, Centre d'études occitanes, 1978), vol. 1, p. 19.

[122]Robreau, L'honneur et la honte: Leur expression dans les romans en prose du Lancelot-Graal (XII – XIIIe siècles).

[123]Leo Charles Yedlicka, Expressions of the Linguistic Area of Repentance and Remorse in Old French (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1945).

as Robreau and Yedlicka.

Following an examination of the vocabulary of shame and guilt, I will examine how shame and guilt are portrayed as feelings. Are the feelings ever feigned? Are the feelings experienced only when external sanctions are also brought to bear? I will then examine how shame and guilt are presented as sanctions: the punishments typically brought to bear for each and in what kinds of situations, and their effectiveness as deterrents. I will conclude with an examination of the social context of shame and guilt. In what kinds of situations do shame and guilt arise? How are shame and guilt related to other components of the medieval world view? Again, I stress that assessing the relative importance of shame and guilt in the French fabliaux will be my secondary goal throughout this study; my primary goal is to identify how shame and guilt mesh with other components of medieval culture.

Throughout the sections on feelings and sanctions I will make reference to evidence from historical sources or penitential literature that buttresses or helps explain some of the phenomenon associated with shame and guilt in the fabliaux. While a systematic comparison with shame and guilt as evidenced in historical or penitential sources would have been interesting, due to considerations of scope I have again limited my references to what is readily available in secondary sources.

Medieval Concepts of Guilt and the Danger of Anachronism

Historians of the Middle Ages may well balk at my use of the anthropological and psychological definitions of guilt. Christian theologians over the course of centuries elaborated on the concept of guilt and the various stages in the penitential process. To use a relatively simple and modern definition in this study may therefore seem anachronistic. There are three arguments to counter this charge.

First, my intention in this study is not to examine whether or not nor how contemporary penitential doctrine was reflected in the fabliaux. Jean-Charles Payen in his Le Motif du repentir has already done this for much of the literature of medieval France. I am addressing instead the question of how shame and guilt were used to interpret and guide behavior in medieval society and how their various manifestations were related to other components of the medieval mentality. In order to do so I must adhere to the anthropological definitions.

Second, the anthropological and psychological definitions of guilt are not anachronistic to a medieval point of view. What are described as the four constants in the ritual of forgiveness

from the early church to the Reformation[124] incorporated all the basic elements of the social scientists' modern definition of guilt: a feeling of sorrow (the recognition of having done wrong), confession, penitential exercises (which restore the balance between the Self and the Other) and a ritual of absolution (a recognition that the balance has been restored.) The writings of St. Thomas Aquinas on penance, which were widely circulated in the fourteenth century and later through their incorporation into John of Fribourg's Summa confessorum[125] and which became the cornerstone of the church doctrine on penance as set out by the Council of Trent, contain all of the elements of the anthropological and psychological definitions of guilt.[126] Following St. Augustine, Aquinas says that all sin is against God, but it can be differentiated as to whether its object is oneself, one's neighbor, or God.[127] While the sinner may initially come to penance only out of fear of punishment, through the grace received in the sacrament of confession the sinner receives the gift of perfect contrition, true sorrow for having offended a just and merciful God. This parallels the anthropological definition of guilt, according to which the guilty act entails a disruption in the relationship with the "Other" and does some harm to the "Other." The restoration of balance to the relationship entails, according to Aquinas, making amends for the *poena reatus*, or guilt of punishment. Expiating the *poena reatus* can be accomplished by works of satisfaction on earth or purification in purgatory. The purpose of acts of satisfaction for this *poena reatus* are twofold: to make amends for the wrong done, a judicial purpose in keeping with the anthropological definition of guilt, and a medicinal purpose, to restore and reorder one's appetites and restore the image of God in the human being.[128] The concept of making amends as described here clearly entails the notion of the restoration of

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[124]Tentler, Sin and Confession 3.

[125]Leonard E. Boyle, "The 'Summa Confessorum' of John of Frieburg and the Popularization of the Moral Teaching of St. Thomas and Some of His Contemporaries," St. Thomas Aquinas, 1274-1974. Commemorative Essays, ed. A.A. Maurer, vol. 2 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974) 245-268. Reprinted in Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200 – 1400 (1981).

[126]For a summary of Aquinas' views on penance and confession, see Palmer 204-205, 213-214; B. Poschmann, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, trans. and rev. F. Courtney (New York, 1964); and Romanus Cessario, "St. Thomas Aquinas on Satisfaction, Indulgences, and Crusades," Medieval Philosophy and Theology 2 (1992): 74-96.

[127]Summa theologiae Ia2ae, 72, 4: "commune est omni peccato quod sit contra Deum; ponitur enim in definitione peccati quod sit contra legem Dei, ut supra dictum est." Cf. Delumeau 192-194. Abelard similarly argued that sin derived from the contempt of God. See Poschmann 158.

[128]Cessario.

balance in the relationship. Aquinas even uses the term "balance of justice:"

> A sinful act makes a person punishable in that he violates the order of divine justice. He returns to that order only by some punitive restitution that restores the balance of justice (*ad aequalitatem justitiae reducit*), in this way, namely, that one who by acting against a divine commandment, has indulged his own will beyond what was right, should, according to the order of divine justice, either voluntarily or by constraint be subjected to something not to his liking. The same sort of practice is followed in regard to wrongs done to other human beings: by payment of damages the balance of justice (*aequalitas justitiae*) is restored.[129]

Aquinas states that all crime (which includes sin) is a defiance of the law; for this reason, punishment (in addition to mere reparation) must be imposed as reparation for violating the law.[130] This echoes the anthropological conception of guilt as violation of a law.

While it is obvious that Aquinas' conception of guilt and its remission through the sacrament of penance are much more sophisticated and elaborate than what we find in the modern definitions of anthropologists and social scientists, nevertheless, they do share in the basics of the modern definitions of guilt.[131] Other medieval authors also expressed ideas on guilt and penance that demonstrate a striking similarity to the modern anthropological and psychological definitions. Two anonymous writers on penance in the mid-thirteenth century, for example, state the principle of *contrarii contrariis*: penances imposed should be the contrary of the sin committed. If a sinner has set a bad example through his sin, for instance, he must set a good example by performing public penance.[132] Such a concept clearly echoes the

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[129]Summa theologiae, Ia2ae, 87, 6.

[130]Summa theologiae, II-II, a. 62, arts. 3, 6. Peter Lombard had similarly noted that there was no sin if there was no prohibition: "Non enim consisteret peccatum, si interdictio non fuisset." Cited in Berman 186.

[131]At least one medieval writer even makes a distinction between shame and guilt that is not unlike that made by modern social scientists. Richard of St. Victor in his De eruditione hominis interioris speaks about shame and guilt as being two of the types of motives that bring different types of people to confession. Some penitents, he writes, are more prone to fear and are motivated by a fear of chastisement, while others, more prone to shame, are motivated by the recollection of their filthy lascivious deeds: "Sed scimus quia in aliis timor, in aliis autem principatur pudor. Nam alii quidem sunt magis timorati quam verecundi; alii vero magis verecundi quam timorati. Qui igitur timidiores sunt facilius compunguntur ex consideratione propriae crudelitatis quam voluptatis. Qui vero verecundiores familiarius ad poenitentiam emolliuntur ex recordatione foedae voluptatis quam iniquitatis." (col. 1289-1290; cited in Anciaux 162).

[132]Mansfield 47.

anthropological definition of guilt as a need to restore balance in the relationship with the other. The notion that sins created a debt that had to be expiated through acts of penance was a common place in medieval theology and vision literature.[133] St. Bonaventure, for instance, refers to the *poena* from sin as a *pretium* or price that had to be repaid to God.[134] Vernacular sermons of the thirteenth century used the imagery of accounting to describe God's reckoning of man's sins and the expiation of the punishment due.[135] Many of the sermons on the nature of sin and forgiveness were based on biblical texts which made heavy use of the language of debt and repayment.[136] According to Harold Berman, the creation of All Souls' Day shortly after 1000 and the spreading influence of the idea of Purgatory in the eleventh and twelfth centuries caused sin "to be understood in legal terms as specific wrongful acts or desires or thoughts for which various penalties must be paid in temporal suffering, whether in this life or the next."[137] Clearly the definition of guilt as delineated by modern social scientists is not anachronistic to a medieval point of view.

Third, many works of medieval literature have been misread because scholars have not carefully distinguished between shame and guilt and have failed to define the terms. Payen in his analysis of the Geste de Guillaume, for instance, states that Vivien's expression of pride in his soliloquy at his death can not be the product of a shame culture because Vivien dies alone, far from his companions. Payen states that Vivien is motivated not by pride but by the image he has of his own valor and merit, which he knows is due to God. According to the anthropological and psychological definitions of shame and guilt, however, Vivien's pride in his own valor and merit is an expression of pride in his status, however, regardless of whether others are present, and should be interpreted as shame.[138] Bloch makes a similar mistake when he describes the reaction of Tristan and Iseut upon awakening in the forest and discovering the evidence that King Marc

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[133]Mansfield 57-58. On vision literature, see Aaron J. Gurevich, "Au Moyen Age, conscience individuelle et image de l'au-delà," Annales E.S.C. 37.2 (1982): 261-263.

[134]Cited in Mansfield 57.

[135]Zink 447.

[136]Solignac 99-116.

[137]Berman 171.

[138]Payen 138-144

was there.[139] Tristan mourns the fact that he is no longer leading a life at court, but instead is wretched, unclothed, and without furs. Iseut laments that she should have maidens at her side, to serve her and to marry off to the young nobles at the court. Because they are calling forth the "internalized ideal" of what their roles should be, and Bloch defines guilt as an internal sanction, he interprets their lamentation as guilt. In fact, however, the concern with status implicit in their remarks is a clear indication of shame. Yedlicka in his discussion of the "good conscience complex," a situation in which a person has not sinned but worries about the possibility, adduces examples that have nothing to do with guilt. For instance, he identifies the "petite turbation" Mary experiences at the Annunciation as described in the Ad Deum vadit as evidence of the "good conscience complex" when Mary is clearly not experiencing guilt but awe at being told that she will be mankind's salvation[140]. It is hoped, then, that by using the anthropological and psychological definitions of shame and guilt, this study will not only not be anachronistic, but may contribute to future studies on the subject by providing a more precise vocabulary for discussing shame and guilt in the Middle Ages.

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[139]Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law 244.

[140]Yedlicka 339.

Chapter 2: THE VOCABULARY OF SHAME AND GUILT

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are two studies on the vocabulary of shame and guilt in Old French, Yvonne Robreau's study of the vocabulary of honor and shame in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle[1] and Brother Leo Yedlicka's study of the vocabulary of repentance and remorse in medieval French moral and didactic literature.[2] The studies differ in their approach. Robreau begins with a detailed analysis of the meaning of *honte* and then examines the meanings of the various substitutes for the word, such as *vergoigne* and *villain*. Yedlicka in contrast discusses the meaning of terms within general categories, such as descriptions of inner sorrow or manifestations of a "disturbed soul state." Within such categories, he then analyzes the meaning of specific terms and also of metaphors or circumlocutions that share the same sense. Both Robreau and Yedlicka examine the context in which the various terms appear in order to identify their various meanings. As noted above, neither author begins with a definition of shame or guilt, which occasionally causes some difficulties.[3]

The method I use in this study is somewhat different. I first examine what anthropologists term "focus words" or "core terms,"[4] those words which are most commonly used to describe the experience of shame and guilt and which crystallize or condense a number of the significations associated with the experience. The most obvious example, in the case of shame, is the word *honte*. I limit myself to those terms which are consistent with the anthropological and psychological definitions of shame and guilt. I then flesh out the full meaning of such terms by examining the words with which these terms are commonly paired

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[1]L'honneur et la honte: Leur expression dans les romans en prose du Lancelot-Graal (XII - XIIIe siècles) (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1981).

[2]Expressions of the Linguistic Area of Repentance and Remorse in Old French (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1945).

[3]Robreau, pp. 75-93, includes in her study a detailed analysis of the word *gloire* even though the word and related terms are applied only to God, Christ, and the saints and do not convey the sense of status appertaining to the honor/shame dichotomy.

[4]Byron J. Good, "The Heart of What's the Matter: The Semantics of Illness in Iran," Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry 1 (1977): 38-39. See also James J. Fox, "On Binary Categories and Primary Symbols: Some Rotinese Perspectives, " Interpretation of Symbolism, ed. Roy Willis (New York: Halstead, 1975) 110-111, 119; and Victor Turner, The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967) 28-30.

(collocations), contrasted (antonyms), and qualified, and the contexts in which they typically appear. Depending on the term, this may include an analysis of whether the term usually describes an internal or external sense of shame or guilt, whether it more commonly has a concrete or abstract sense, and/or whether it is typically employed in an ironic or humorous manner. Where appropriate, I also ascertain to which aspects of the experience of shame or guilt, as outlined in Figure 1, the term typically applies: deterrent, act or occurrence, state, internal feeling, and/or punishment or sanction. Throughout this analysis I note whether or how the meaning or application of these terms differs from that described in the studies of Yedlicka and Robreau.

Following an analysis of the various meanings of each of these core terms, I identify other terms or situations that, while not directly indicative of shame or guilt, are still related to the experience. These related terms are sometimes single words conveying a single meaning; at other times they are more general concepts (e.g., "reputation" words) which are expressed by a variety of terms (e.g., *los*, *renommé*, and *renom*).

Finally, I map out the semantic network linking the various terms. My model is Good's analysis of the terminology of illness and heart disease in modern Iran.[5] Good shows how the polyvalent symbolic meanings of "focus words" or "core terms" can be understood first by examining the various meanings of such terms or concepts in themselves and then mapping out their relationship to other concepts. The meaning of the core terms or concepts can be understood from the resulting "semantic network." In Good's words, "a system of discourse has certain symbols which gather their power and meaning by linking together a set or field of disparate symbols and condensing them into a simple image which can 'invoke a nexus of symbolic associations.'"[6] These symbols or images can cut across conventional grammatical boundaries. By employing the terms indicative of these symbols, users of the language not only convey meaning but have access to a "cultural code"[7] which can shape and determine thought and action.

While not all of the terms indicative of shame and guilt in the fabliaux can rightly be called core terms or focus words because they lack polyvalent meanings or symbolic associations, still the construction of a semantic network based on core terms appertaining to the

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[5]Good 25-58.

[6]Good 38.

[7]Good 39.

experience of shame and guilt can deepen our appreciation of what these terms meant for the fabliaux *conteurs* and their audience. In this study I map out the network for all the core terms and other related concepts or terms frequently employed to indicate shame and guilt. It will thus be possible to discern how shame and guilt were related to other components in the medieval mentality, the boundaries of the experience of shame or guilt, and how shame and guilt were related to one another.

My approach thus varies from that used in more traditional linguistic studies of semantic fields. As pioneered by Jost Trier and developed by John Lyons, semantic field studies generally begin with an analysis of "lexical fields," the meanings attached to a word and its conceptual cognates. On the basis of these lexical fields, a "semantic field" (or what Lyons terms a "conceptual field") can then be constructed that groups terms into conceptual categories relevant to users of the language. The meaning of these various semantic and lexical fields can be understood by their relations to one another. Fundamental to this approach is an appreciation of how these semantic fields shift over the course of time, and how different languages vary in the way they categorize the same fields of experience.[8] My approach differs from semantic field studies in that I begin at a conceptual level, using the anthropological definitions of shame and guilt as a guide to determining what terms express the concepts of shame and guilt. Using terms whose definitions as given in the standard dictionaries of Old French suggest that they pertain to the experience of shame and guilt, I then use the contexts in which they appear in the fabliaux, including their collocations and antonyms, to identify the "core terms" that are used to express the concepts of shame and guilt and to map out the relationships between them. This is consistent with the approach outlined by Good and used by other anthropologists. While some may argue that this more deductive approach is at risk of cultural and linguistic bias (because, for example, my concept of "guilt" may be shaped by my understanding of what "guilt" means in English and what it means to a North American), by virtue of the fact that I begin with concepts of shame and guilt that have their basis in cross-cultural anthropological studies, I have substantially lessened the risk of cultural and linguistic bias.

My approach is also not etymological. While it would have been useful to trace the

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[8]Jost Trier, "Das sprachliche Feld," Wortfeldforschung. Zur Geschichte und Theorie des sprachlichen Feldes, ed. Lothar Schmidt (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973) 129-161; John Lyons, Structural Semantics. An Analysis of Part of the Vocabulary of Plato (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963); and the same author's Semantics, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

changes in the meaning of terms describing shame and guilt over the course of time, considerations of scope and the fact that many fabliaux can not be dated precisely have necessitated that I take a more static approach. An examination of the etymological origin of the terms used to describe shame and guilt would also have been revealing, especially in light of Lohmander's study of the vocabulary of shame, disgrace, and dishonor in Middle English.[9] Lohmander found that only one out of the 27 terms used to express these terms in Old English survived into Middle English, the others being replaced by loan words from French and Latin. We find some parallels in Old French. The words *honte, honir* and *lait,* core terms in the vocabulary of shame, were all Frankish in origin, but most others, including *deshonor*, *vilain*, and *vil,* were not. Considerations of scope again prevent a more detailed analysis of how the terms used to express concepts of shame and guilt changed over time.

As Robreau did in her study of the vocabulary of honor and shame in the Lancelot-Grail cycle, I will be using multiple examples of each vocabulary term.[10] In this way the reader may be able to verify my interpretations.

Section 1: The Vocabulary of Shame

Part 1: Core Terms Directly Indicating Shame

A. Honir, Honte, and Related Terms

The words "honir", "honte", "honteus", "hontage", and "ahonter," usually translated as "shame" and "to shame,"[11] form the basis of Robreau's study on honor and shame in the literature of the Lancelot-Grail cycle and appear in the fabliaux as well to be the "core terms" most frequently used to denote shame as defined above. The contexts in which these words appear in

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[9]Ingegerd Lohmander, Old and Middle English Words for 'Disgrace' and 'Dishonour,' Gothenburg Studies in English 49 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1981).

[10]Robreau 3-4.

[11]A.J. Greimas, Dictionnaire de l'ancien français jusqu'au milieu du XIVe siècle(Paris: Larousse, 1980); Frederic Eugene Godefroy, Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IX siècle au XVe siècle (Paris: Émile Bouillon, Libraire-Éditeur, 1880-1902); and Adolf Tobler and Erhard Lommatzsch, Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1925-1974), referred to hereafter as Tobler-Lommatzsch.

the fabliaux clearly illustrates that these terms refer to shame as defined by anthropologists and psychologists. One of the more revealing examples is provided by (118) Le Jugement, in which some nuns vie with one another to see who can tell the best tale of her sexual adventures; the prize is a ring. One nun, reluctant to speak her "bel mot," is urged on by the abbess with the words:

> ..."N'ayez hontage,
> Mettez vergongne en non chaloir.
> Cuidez vous de mains en valoir?
> Nennil, non! Dictes sans respit!" (ll. 8-11)
>
> "Don't be ashamed, don't be concerned about shame. Do you think you'll be worth less? Not at all; speak without delay."

Appearing in conjunction with the phrase, "Cuidez vous de mains en valoir?" ("Do you think you will be worth less?"), the word "hontage" clearly conveys the feeling of being a lesser person which, according to social scientists, is the essence of the experience of shame. The fabliau (37) La vieille Truande provides another example. In this fabliau a squire encounters an old beggar woman who claims she is his mother. Protesting that his mother was a rich bourgeoise, the squire exclaims:

> "Vois, fait il, por le geule Diu,
> Sui bien honis! A ci boin giu,
> Quant ceste laide vielle torce
> Se fait me mere tot a force:
> Pres va que jou ne l'escervele!" (ll. 129-133)
>
> "Truly," he says, "By God's throat, I am well shamed! In this good game, when this ugly twisted old woman makes herself my mother completely by force, I'm close to cracking her head open!"

Accused of being of lower parentage than he claims, the squire is clearly experiencing shame as defined above. Another example is provided by (81) Le Prestre teinte, in which a priest attempts to seduce a faithful wife. She strikes the priest in her outrage at being propositioned, and he flees "o tote sa honte:"

> Li prestres o tote sa honte
> S'en vet fuiant a son ostel....
> Molt a de ce le cuer mari;
> Que de s'amour l'a refusé... (ll. 55-56; 65-66)
>
> The priest goes flying from her house with all his shame.... He is greatly afflicted in the heart for this reason, that she has refused him her love.

In describing the priest's reaction to having failed to attain his goal, the word "honte" again plainly refers to the experience of shame.

Robreau in her study of the vocabulary of shame in the romances of the Lancelot-Grail cycle found that the various words in the *honte* family had very specific application.[12] The verb *honir* in the romances is generally applied only to severe, concrete and generally irreversible cases of shaming, usually involving trickery or deceit, sexual or physical violence (including physical mutilation), or death. The expression *faire honte*, on the other hand, is more commonly reserved for milder cases of shaming in which the harm done may be easily avenged, as for example when one knight insults another. The word *honte* alone usually refers to dishonorable situations in which customs typically conveying honor are not followed, or, in general, when respect is not shown for a person's rank, as for example when a courteous salutation is not returned. *Honte* is also used to refer to insults; it is in fact in the context of insults that the word *honte* most frequently appears, usually in an expression such as "dire honte" or "dire des hontes". In the fabliaux, however, the distinction between *faire honte* and *honir* appears to be less marked.

1. Honir

As in the Lancelot-Grail cycle, *honir* is frequently used in the fabliaux to indicate injuries and/or death. Interestingly, even when the word clearly indicates "to injure," the sense of "to shame" is virtually always implicit in that it indicates a form of injury (or killing) that also brings shame: being seized and killed like a criminal, being castrated, or being beaten and having one's hair shorn off by a jealous husband.[13] The fabliau (124) Trubert plays on the double sense of *honir* as "to injure" and "to shame". In this fabliau, a duke agrees to buy a multi-colored goat from a fool, Trubert, for the low price of 5 sous and 4 hairs from his posterior. The fool, who is in fact a malevolent trickster, seriously injures the duke in front of all his men when he pierces the duke's flesh with a puncheon in the process of extracting a hair. Having returned home to his wife, the duke curses his assailant with the words, "Penduz soit il, que honi m'a!" (l. 348: "May he be hanged who has injured me!"). The word *honir* is interpreted otherwise by his wife, who has slept with the fool and fears that her husband knows of the adultery. She takes her husband's words to mean, "May he be hanged who has shamed me!" and immediately makes a full confession to her husband when in fact he had not suspected a thing. Although *honir* here clearly

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[12]Robreau 119-145.

[13]See (1) Estormi, ll. 381, 629; (21) Les Perdris, l. 85; (29) Le Vallet aus douze Fames, ll.123, 133; (59) Le Foteor, l. 357.14; and (69) Les Tresces B l. 179, 310.

conveys both the sense of "to injure" and "to shame," even in the sense of "to injure" the duke has been shamed, for when the duke later tells his wife about the injury he received, he stresses how he was deceived and how this deception took place in front of all his men, implying that his status in the eyes of his men has been diminished:

> Bien puet une fame enginier
> Cil qui deçoit un chevalier!
> Dame, voiant toute ma gent
> M'a si mené, ne sai coment,
> Que ne puis sor mes piez ester. (l. 389-393)
>
> Well can he deceive a woman who deceived a knight! Wife, in front of all my men he treated me so that -- I don't know how -- I can barely stand on my feet.

The verb *honir* is also used to indicate the shame of defeat or betrayal, again as in the Lancelot-Grail cycle. Indeed, all the examples of injuries just cited entail physical defeat at the hands of another. Non-physical forms of deceit and betrayal are also described by *honir*. The nurse in (30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue (Heron) uses *honir* to describe the shame of being betrayed by the young girl who has allowed herself to be ravished by a wandering knight despite the nurse's warnings and extraordinary efforts to guard her virginity: "Comme ore m'auez traie;/ E desconfite et hunie" (ll. 69-70: "How you have now betrayed me and vanquished and shamed me!").[14] While the humor of exaggeration and an element of courtly parody may be present in the nurse's references to betrayal and vanquishing, nevertheless the association is revealing: the words with which "honir" are most commonly paired are words that indicate betrayal or defeat, such as "honiz et deceuz,"[15] "honiz et mate",[16] "honi et confondu,"[17] and "honye et engyné."[18]

Robreau states that when *honir* in the Lancelot-Graal cycle is used to describe sexual relations, it is applied to situations involving rape -- which constitutes an irreparable form of

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[14]See also (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre, l. 108; (124) Trubert, l. 2042; and (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur, in which the jongleur exclaims "Voire...ge sui honiz!" (l. 183) upon losing his first throw in a game of dice with Saint Peter. The jongleur's lament may refer not only to his defeat but also to the possible injuries which his master Lucifer will inflict on him for losing the souls entrusted to his care.

[15](26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre I l. 108; (124) Trubert l. 2042.

[16](2) Constant du Hamel l. 655.

[17](22) Du Con qui fu fait a la Besche l. 81.

[18](15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons M ll. 189-190.

shame -- or to incidents in which an underling has slept with his overlord's wife -- a form of betrayal or treason.[19] The word *honir* as applied to sexual relations is used more broadly in the fabliaux. In the fabliaux, *honir* is applied most often to the cuckold, regardless of whether the offender is the cuckold's underling.[20] A man who does not punish his wife after she has cuckolded him, or who allows her to raise herself above him, is also termed *honi*.[21] This latter usage, in my view, explains why the cuckold is shamed. Robreau notes that *honte* in the Lancelot-Grail cycle is often applied to situations in which a person is not treated in a manner befitting his or her status.[22] When a woman cuckolds her husband, she is in fact failing to treat him in a manner befitting his status. She is raising herself above him and showing that he is not man enough to control her.

Women are likewise *honi* in the context of sexual relations when they are unwilling partners.[23] Again, there is a sense that women in such situations are not being treated in a manner

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[19]Robreau 137-138.

[20]See (2) Constant du Hamel ll 641-642, l. 655; (22) Du Con qui fu fait a la Besche l. 81; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 190, 206; (77) Connebert l. 72; (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers l. 183 C; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 864; (107) Les deus Vilains l. 139; and (124) Trubert l. 348. Only in the case of (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse is it a matter of a lord being cuckolded by his own men.

[21]See (69) Les Tresces l. 163 B; and (83) La Dame escoillee l. 4. In (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, the old spice merchant's admonition to the husband, "Honiz es se ne te porpenses!" (l. 182), can be understood as a reference to the fact that the husband has allowed his "amie" to be above him in status. At the end, the *conteur* advises husbands that if they had as much wealth as the king of France and abandoned it all to a "garce," she would see them as beneath her and esteem them less than a dog:

> Se aviez autant d'avoir
> Com li rois de France, pour voir,
> Si l'eüssiez abandonné
> A une garce et tot donné,
> Et el vos veoit au desouz,
> Plus vos aroit vil que un gouz. (ll. 405-410)

> If you had as much wealth as the king of France, truly, if you had
> abandoned it and given it all to a girl, and she saw you were beneath her,
> she would consider you more vile than a dog.

There may also be some element of defeat present in the use of the word *honir* in this fabliau; the wife has earlier told her husband that his amie "vos ocit et vos afole" (l. 27).

[22]Robreau 121-124.

[23](1) Estormi l. 604; (2) Constant du Hamel l. 64; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 1036; and (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, in which the wife claims before her household that the

befitting their status; they are shamed when they are raped because they are not being treated as "bones fames."[24]

The word *honir* is also used to refer to the shame willing partners in an adulterous liaison fear they will suffer if the affair is revealed to others. In (74) Le Sacristain II, for instance, Ydoine tells the overly-eager sacristan who tries to have intercourse with her on the hearth that they should retire to an inside chamber to avoid being "honi" if they are seen by passers-by:

> ...Por Dé merci,
> Endui serions ja honi,
> Quar ge crieg que la gent nos voie,
> Qui trespassent par mi la voie:
> En cele chanbre m'en portez,
> La si faites voz volentez. (ll. 321-326)
>
> For God's sake, both of us would be shamed, for I fear people going along the road will see us: carry me into this room, and there do your will.

Similarly the lover in (51) Les deus Changeors who begs his beloved not to reveal his presence to her husband also uses *honir* to refer to the shame that the revelation of their affair may bring: "Ne honissiez moi et vous ci" (l. 230: Do not shame me and you here).[25] Hence the word *honir*,

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cleric has intended to shame her and her lord: "Mei quidout honir e mon baron" (l. 561). (The wife has actually had an adulterous liaison with the cleric, but is feigning that she has not.)

[24]Cf. (14) Aloul, in which Hersent, the old servant woman, convinces the household that their mistress would never have an affair because she is a "molt bone dame" of "bon renom:"

> "Ma dame n'a soing de hontage,
> Ainz est certes mout bone dame;
> Bon renon a de preude fame,
> Et vous li fetes tel anui!" (1396-399)

Similarly in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, the wife urges the household to attack the cleric who sought to sleep with her by telling them to make sure he'll never have it in his heart to do "hontage" to a "gentil femme" again: "Fetes ke mes ne eit corage/Fere a gentil femme hontage! (ll. 545-546). An interesting historical example, dating from 1394, shows how rape was viewed as an attack on a woman's honor. The example is cited in Walter Prevenier, "Violence against Women in a Medieval Metropolis: Paris around 1400," Law, Customs and the Social Fabric in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honor of Bryce Lyon, ed. Bernard S. Bachrach and David Nicholas, Studies in Medieval Culture 28 (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1990) 270. Trying to dissuade her attackers, a Paris widow tells her assailants that she is a "bonne, preude femme," married and the mistress of a household. The rape thus inflicts dishonor.

[25]See also (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, ms. E, in which the wife tells her husband that he is "honi" by having a mistress, for everyone talks about it: Vous maintenez vne musarde/Qui vous honnit et vous afole/Et touz li mondes en parole..." (ll. 25-27). It is only in this manuscript that the word "honnit" occurs; the other manuscripts, including the one on which the critical edition is

when applied to sexual relations in the fabliaux, has a broader application than in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle. It refers not just to rape or betrayal but to any extra-marital act of sex in which there is an unwilling woman, an unwitting husband, or the fear of discovery.

In other senses as well the word *honir* is used differently in the fabliaux than in the Lancelot-Grail cycle. In the fabliaux the word *honir* is used to describe insults, while in the Lancelot-Grail cycle only the word *honte* is applied to insults.[26] In several fabliaux *honir* is used to describe characters who suffer a decline in status when they are wed to persons of lower status, as for example the daughter of the indebted vavasor in (10) Jouglet who is *honi* by being married to a peasant: "Por la char Dieu, bien sui honie/ Quant cest vilain gist delez mi!" (ll. 134-135: "By God's flesh, how I am shamed when this peasant lies besides me...").[27] Robreau notes that *honir* is usually applied to cases of irreversible shaming;[28] perhaps a noble woman forced by impecuniosity to wed a lower-class person (an event which simply does not occur in the Lancelot-Grail cycle) should be understood as suffering an irreversible decline in status like that described by the word *honir* in the Lancelot-Grail cycle.

The word *honir* is also used occasionally to indicate "to soil," both in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle and in the fabliaux.[29] In the fabliau (10) Jouglet, for instance, the newlywed

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based, use instead the phrase "Qui vous ocist et vous afole", which in fact conveys the sense of injury and defeat usually indicated by "honir." Ms E is considered by the editors of the NRCF the least satisfactory, containing many errors and malformed verses.

26(15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 189 M; and (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, l. 412. As will be discussed below in the case of *dire honte*, the insults entail not verbal affronts concerning one's lineage, class, or cowardly behavior, but rather are statements concerning what specific shameful things a person has done.

27Cf. the peasant wife in (46) La Coille noire who asserts "Certes, honie sui et morte" (l. 20) when she discovers she has been married to a man with black testicles. The young knight in (37) La vieille Truande is similarly "honi" when an old beggar woman he meets alone in the forest claims she is his mother:

> "Vois," fait il, "por le geule Diu!
> Sui bien honis! A ci boin giu,
> Quant ceste laide vielle torce
> Se fait me mere tot a force... (ll. 129-132)

"Truly," he said, "By God's throat! I am well shamed! In this good game, when this ugly old slut makes herself my mother, completely by force..."

28Robreau 136.

29Robreau 156. See also Greimas; Godefroy; and Tobler-Lommatzsch.

wife uses the word "honir" to describe the minstrel Jouglet's state after he has been besmeared by feces deposited in his bed and the surrounding area. She tells the minstrel, "Puis c'ous estes deu tout honis,/ Alez vos laver au seel..." (ll. 370-372: "Since you're so soiled, go wash yourself in the bucket..."). Just as the word *honir* when used to indicate "to injure" in the fabliaux always conveyed a sense of diminished status as well, so too the word *honir* in this context may also convey a sense of diminished status. As I will demonstrate later, being soiled by feces was sometimes a part of shaming rituals.

2. Honte

While in the Lancelot-Grail cycle the word *honte* is applied only to milder cases of shaming in which the insult done can be easily avenged, the word *honte* in the fabliaux is applied to the entire spectrum of shame experiences, from mild insults to severe forms of shaming involving public humiliation and harsh physical abuse.

As in the Lancelot-Grail cycle, the expression *dire honte* is used in the fabliaux to indicate insults.[30] In the fabliaux, however, this expression generally concerns not insults about one's class ("vilain," "ribaut"), lineage ("fils a putain"), or lack of courage and loyalty ("couart, desloial, traistre"), as in the Lancelot-Grail cycle, but instead is used to describe the act of telling a person to his or her face a specific shameful thing he or she has done. For example, when the mother of the priest in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force tells him he does not love her, his own mother, one-tenth as much as he loves his concubine, whom he showers with presents, the priest uses the expression *dire honte* to describe what she has said: "...vos m'avez dit meinte honte!" (l. 29: "...you have said much shame to me!"). In (2) Constant du Hamel, the priest publicly denounces Constant in church at Mass for marrying a relative. The expression *dire honte* is used to describe what the priest does: "Lors fu Coutanz toz abosmez/ Que li prestres li dit tel honte" (ll. 205-206: "Then was Constant completely crushed, because the priest said such shame to him"). In (83) La Dame escoillee, the father begs his daughter to obey her husband, for otherwise people will say "honte" to her:

> Se uos honor auoir uolez
> Cremez uostre seignor le conte
> Se que nus ne die honte... (ll. 252-254 E)
>
> If you want to have honor, fear your lord the count, so that no one will speak shame to you.

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[30]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

Interestingly, while *dire honte* is the expression most commonly used in the Lancelot-Grail cycle to indicate "to insult", and while insults are the occasion which most frequently give rise to the use of the word *honte* in the Lancelot-Grail cycle, the expression *dire honte* does not occur as frequently in the fabliaux.[31]

Insults which entail not verbal abuse but the act of treating someone in a manner not befitting their rank are also described by "honte". The expression *faire honte* is employed frequently in this sense in the Lancelot-Grail cycle and is also used this way in the fabliaux.[32] In (124) Trubert, for instance, the trickster Trubert accuses his dinner partner at a courtly banquet of doing "honte" to a noble company when a loud fart is heard: "A toz nos avez fet grant honte!" (l. 533: You have done great shame to us all).[33] Interestingly, in the fabliaux this use of the expression *faire honte* is applied most frequently to situations in which a jealous husband treats his wife as if she has already cuckolded him. The jealous husband in (104) La Feme qui cunquie son Baron who keeps his wife locked up is said to do her "honte":

> Et li vilains et honte et lait
> Li refaisoit et rebatoit,
> Com cil qui jalous en estoit. (ll. 10-12)

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[31]The only other occurrences are in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, l. 407; (56) Frere Denise, ll. 241-242; and (93) Guillaume au Faucon, ll. 540-541. Other expressions similar in meaning are also used in the fabliaux. In (30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue (Heron), the young girl tells the knight that her nurse, who berated her for having lost her virginity, "A grant honte m'ad atornee" (l. 105 i: "Turned me to great shame"). The phrase "avoir mis honte sur quelqu'un" has the same meaning in (69) Les Tresces, in which the wife scolds her husband for having wrongly accused her of adultery: "Grant honte li auoit mis sore" (l. 301 B: "He placed great shame on me").

[32]Greimas.

[33]Note also the knight in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, who says it would be "honte" to steal the clothing of some women bathing in a fountain (ll. 154-155); such villainous behavior would be an insult to the women, whose fine clothing indicates their noble status. The sacristan in (74) Le Sacristain II is said to have "honte" done to him by his "gain" in relieving himself on the latrine, where he seems to have fallen asleep, or so it seems to the prior. The prior says to him:

> Honie soit vostre gaaigne,
> Qui si vos a grant honte faite!
> Ainçois me fust la cuisse fraite
> Et le dos ars en un chauz feu
> Que me dormisse en si vil leu! (ll. 436-440)

> May your gain be shamed, which has done you such shame! I would rather that my leg be broken and my back burned in a hot fire, than that I sleep in such a vile place!

Falling asleep in a shameful place has in a sense caused the sacristan to insult himself.

And the peasant did her shame and outrage and cut her off like a jealous man.

The wife in (14) Aloul, likewise mistrusted and kept a virtual prisoner by her jealous husband, similarly claims her husband has done her much shame: "...mainte honte m'en a fete." (l. 117). The woman in (69) Les Tresces II who is posing as a wife unjustly accused of adultery similarly uses the expression *demener à honte* when she tells the husband who has kicked her out of the house that he has treated her shamefully: " à tel honte me demaine" (l. 182).

As noted above, *faire honte* in the Lancelot-Grail cycle is most often used to indicate insults or disgraceful or dishonorable acts which can be avenged, while *honir* in contrast is usually used to indicate death, mutilation, and severe forms of shaming which can not be avenged. In the fabliaux this distinction is not present. As noted above, *honir* in the fabliaux is used to indicate the injuries that occur as the result of one character defeating another; the injuries range from mild to severe. The expression *faire honte* is also used in the fabliaux to indicate mild to severe forms of injury, including death, but underlying the use of this expression is not a sense of defeat but rather a sense of punishment. Almost without exception, the word *honte* when used to indicate injuries or death in the fabliaux refers to injuries that result from a wronged party, or the representative of a wronged party, punishing the wrongdoer.[34] Hence the innkeeper in (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne says he will do shame (l. 188: "chascuns ara de son cors honte") to the three blind beggars who cannot pay their tab. The peasant in (43) La Male Honte II is repeatedly beaten by the king's men, an occurrence referred to as *honte* (l. 106), for insulting the king. The knight in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier threatens to injure the squire if he fails to carry out his command: "Je vous ferai honte du cors" (l. 1076: "I will do shame to your body"). In (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche, the provost is said to have "honte" done to his flesh when he is beaten by the squires and the cooks attending a banquet for having stolen some lard: "Mout li fist grante honte la chars." (l. 127: They did great shame to his flesh). In (1) Estormi, the three priests who plot to buy the favors of a married woman and are subsequently killed when struck by the outraged husband are said to be delivered to great shame: "cil furent a grant honte/Livré" (ll. 30-31); one of the priests is said to pursue his own "mal" and "honte": "Qui queroit son mal et sa honte" (l. 199).[35] The expression *avoir honte* is also frequently used to

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[34]The only possible exception may be (76) La Plantez, in which the harm done to the tavernkeeper by the Norman's sound drubbing is referred to as *honte* (l. 114).

[35]See also (1) Estormi l. 535; (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, ll. 259-289; (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche l. 127; (52) Le Vilain au Buffet l. 231; and (61) Brifaut ll. 64-65. The word *honte* refers

indicate the injuries (beatings, maiming, castration) that result from one character punishing another. Typical is the peasant in (43) La Male Honte II who is repeatedly beaten for insulting the king. [36]

The couplets in which the word *honte* appears demonstrate the close connection between shame and injuries or death that occur as the result of punishment. Most often the word *honte* is coupled with *anui* in the expression "faire honte et anui," as for example in (77) Connebert, in which the *conteur* announces that the tale will tell of a priest

> Qui n'ot mie la coille antiere,
> Qant il s'an parti de celui
> Qui li ot fait honte et enui... (ll. 4-6)
> ...who did not have his testicles whole when he left from the house
> of he who did him shame and harm.[37]

As will be discussed later, the word *anui* can convey the sense of "penalty" as well as "pain" or "trouble". The expression *morir à honte* which appears several times in the fabliaux makes explicit the connection between being put to death and shame. In (56) Frere Denise, for instance,

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to death as a form of punishment in (1) Estormi, in which the husband Jehan fears being delivered up "à honte" if his role as murderer is discovered: "J'en serai a honte livrez/Ainz demain a l'avesprement" (ll. 436-437: "I will be delivered up to shame before nightfall tomorrow"). Similarly, the "preudome" in (102) Le Prestre comporté wants to bury the dead body he has discovered at his door "Pour honte esciver et fuir" (l. 466: "to escape and flee from shame").

[36]The peasant laments that he ever saw the purse (*male*) he offers the king, "Car mout en ai eü grant honte" (l. 106: "For I have had much shame from it"). For other examples, see (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne, in which the host, after having beaten the three blind mean who are unable to pay for their meal, tells an inquiring cleric, "Mes de che les voel bien garnir:/ Chascuns ara de son cors honte" (ll. 187-188: But with this I want to warn them well: Each of them will have shame in his body"); (69) Les Tresces II l. 341; (79) Le povre Clerc l. 241; (83) La Dame escoillee l. 315.

[37]Note also (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 961. The conteur in (31) Les quatre Sohais Saint Martin recounts how a husband granted four wishes allows his wife to make a wish; she wastes it by wishing that he be covered with penises. The conteur at the end remarks that a man is not wise who believes in his wife more than himself, for "Souent l'en vient honte et anui" (l. 190 A: Often shame and harm comes to him). "Laidure" is linked to "honte" in (14) Aloul, in which the jealous husband threatens to do his wife "honte et ledure" (l. 144) if she goes out into the orchard again without his permission. "Honte" is linked to "domaige" in (75) Le Prestre qui manja Mores, when the conteur moralizes at the end of the fabliaux that much "honte" and "domaige" comes to the person who speaks his mind too readily: "Quar maint domaige en vient et honte/A mainte gent, ce est la voire..." (ll. 94-95: for much harm and shame comes to many men, this is the truth...) The priest about which this fabliau is concerned has been injured by a fall into some berry-bushes after "speaking his mind" and alarming his horse. While the conteur's remarks are tongue-in-cheek, still there is a sense that "honte" indicates injury.

the *conteur* at the beginning of the fabliau denounces religious hypocrites who wear a habit but lead an impure life: "Bien dovroient tiel gent morir/ Vilainnement et a grant honte" (ll. 12-13: "Such men should die in great sorrow and great shame").[38]

Many forms of punishment in medieval France entailed both physical punishment and shaming rituals. Adulterers, for instance, were typically punished by running "la course" through the town or village, insulted and beaten by the residents who lined their path. Being put to death (whether for adultery or for other offenses) was typically accompanied by numerous shaming rituals. Being deemed a criminal was considered inherently shameful.[39] Hence in the fabliaux expressions such as *faire honte* convey both a sense of "to shame" and "to injure as punishment."

In addition to indicating injuries or death, the expression *faire honte* is frequently used to indicate cuckolding. The priest in (88) Le Prestre et le Leu is said to have done shame ("honte li fesoit" l. 25) to the wronged husband. The conteur in (115) Les Braies le Priestre uses the same expression:

> Recorder ai oÿ mainte conte
> Que priestres ont fait as pluisors honte,
> Et ont a leur femme jeü
> Et avoec çou le leur eü... (ll. 1-4)
>
> I have heard confirmed many tales about how priests have done shame to many, and lain with their wives, and because of this had part in their possessions...

The *conteur* in (69) Les Tresces D states that a man should not kick his wife out of the house at night, for then she will have an opportunity to do him *honte*: "Qu'ele face son mari honte" (l. 433).

Indeed the word *honte* at times appears to be a short-hand term for extra-marital sex. The husband in (42) Le Fevre de Creeil who surprises his wife and his assistant as they prepare to have intercourse tells his assistant:

> "Sire vassal, traiez ensus!
> Par mon chief, vous n'en ferez plus
> Que fet avez, vostre merci!
> Ne remaint pas n'en vous n'en li
> Que grant honte ne m'avez faite." (ll. 149-153)

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[38]See also (61) Brifaut l. 85; (69) Les Tresces I l. 68.

[39]See above, Chapter 1, n. 55.

"Sir Vassal, get up from there, by my head, you will do no more than you have done, thank you very much; you and she have almost done me great shame."

The chambermaid in (114) La Gageure whose love is requested by the squire tells her mistress that the squire requested her shame:

...la requist d'amour;
E cele a sa dame counte
Comment l'esquier requist sa hounte. (ll. 18-20)

...he requested her love, and she told her lady that the squire requested her shame.

In one manuscript of (69) Les Tresces, the woman who agrees to pose for the wife does so only on the condition that the wife's husband not "la foutist ne feïst honte" (l. 147 B: "not have intercourse with her nor do her shame").[40]

The expression *faire honte* occasionally appears to indicate the act of revealing a person's shameful behavior to others. In (93) Guillaume au Faucon, for instance, the wife warns Guillaume, her husband's squire, that she will do him *honte* ("vos feïsse honte," l. 289) if he speaks again of his love for her. A few lines later, she states that her husband will have great joy when she tells him why Guillaume refuses to eat. Clearly the *honte* she will do him is the act of telling her husband about his mis-directed love:

Se vos me pallioz encore
De ce que vos m'avez ci dit,
Ne remendroit, se Dieus m'aïst,
Que ge ne vos feïsse honte! (ll. 286-289)
Molt en avra certes grant joie
Mes sires, quant il le savra:
Certes, tantost com il vendra
Li dirai ge ceste parole
Dont vos m'avez mise a escole. (ll. 296-300)

If you speak to me again about what you've told me, so God may help me, I can only do you shame. ... But certainly my lord will have great joy when he knows about it. Certainly, as soon as he comes I will tell him this lesson with which you've lectured me.[41]

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[40]The other manuscript containing this version, considered closer to the original, reads "la ferist ne feist honte" (l. 140 X: "Not strike her nor do her shame"). Here *honte* has the sense of "injury." See also (6) Barat et Haimet l. 357; and (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre III l. 123 D.

[41]As her husband may well injure the youth in retribution, *faire honte* could also be understood in the sense of "to injure."

Similarly, in (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre II a young lady unable to hear the word *foutre* spoken is tricked into having sex with a young man who cleverly feigns the same aversion to the word *foutre* as herself. In bed together, they engage in an elaborate form of foreplay, identifying their respective private parts in non-sexual language. She terms her anus a hornblower which does "honte et peor" to any animal (penis) which comes to drink from her fountain (vagina):

> Se beste entroit dedanz mon pré
> Por boivre en la fontaine clere,
> Tantost cornerroit li cornerre
> Por faire li honte et peor. (ll. 154-157)
>
> If any beast enters in my meadow to drink from the clear-running fountain, immediately the hornblower will sound, in order to do it shame and fear.

The *honte* done to the animal is the act of sounding the horn, something which was commonly done to alert townspeople when adulterers ran "la course".[42]

Slightly more common in the fabliaux than the expression *faire honte* is the expression *avoir honte*. As noted above, *avoir honte*, just like *faire honte*, can indicate shameful injuries.[43] In other instances, *avoir honte* appears to indicate nothing more than embarrassment in speaking one's mind.[44] For instance, the maidservant Galestrot in (2) Constant du Hamel, playing the role of go-between for her mistress, is said to have no shame in greeting one of her mistress' suitors: "De parler a lui n'a pas honte,/ Ainz le salue fierement" (ll. 509-510: she had no shame in speaking to him, but saluted him proudly). The abbess in (118) Le Jugement similarly instructs

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[42]Jacques Chiffoleau, Les justices du pape: Délinquance et criminalité dans la région d'Avignon au quatorzième siècle (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1984) 240. Cf. Nicole Gonthier, Délinquance, justice et société dans le lyonnais médiéval de la fin du XIIIe siècle au début du XVIe siècle (Paris: AP éditions arguments, 1993) 247. On a literal level, the *honte* done to the animal by the hornblower likely also entails the shame which any creature suffers when exposed to the flatulence of another. See below.

[43]See for example (43) La Male Honte II in which both the expression "avoir honte" and "faire honte" are used to describe the beatings the peasant receives from the king's men. After the second beating, the peasant laments, "Mar vi, fet il, la male Honte,/ Car mout en ai eü grant honte!" (ll. 105-106). In version I, a noble from the king's court suggests the king find out what the "male honte" is before he does him "honte" once again: "Sachiés que est la male honte,/ Mesençois que li faciez honte!" (ll. 127-128).

[44]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

the sister who is reluctant to speak her piece to have no shame: "N'ayés ja honte" (l. 31).[45]

In many other instances, *avoir honte* appears to refer to the inner sense of shame which deters individuals from doing shameful acts.[46] In the fabliaux, this is always expressed in the negative. The wife in (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, for instance, asks her adulterous husband if he has no shame:

> "Biau sire, à mout grant desonour
> Usez vostre vie les moi!
> N'avez honte?... (ll. 22-24)
> Vos meintenez une musarde
> Qui vous ocit et vos afole;
> Et tot li mondes en parrole,
> Car tote la vile le set.
> Et dit chascun que Dieus vos het,
> Et sa Mere et toz ses poeirs." (ll. 26-31)
>
> Sir, you pass your life in great dishonor with me; have you no shame? ... You maintain a mistress who kills and wrongs you, and everyone is talking about it, and each person says that God, his mother, and all his agents hate you.

The sacristan in the fabliaux of the same name (74, version I) is said to hurry to an encounter with the object of his desires because "il n'a ne honte ne vergongne" (l. 158).[47]

Avoir honte is also the expression used to indicate the feeling of shame,[48] as for example in (124) Trubert when all the assembled knights at the feast experience shame upon hearing a loud fart in their midst: "N'i a celui honte n'en ait" (l. 528: there was none who did not have

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[45]See also (36) La Saineresse, l. 102; and (108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit pour Morele sa Provende avoir, in which the wife is said not to be reluctant to ask for sex on account of the "dammage" or "honte": "Ja pour dammage nel laissast,/Ne pour honte..." (ll. 105-106: never would she leave it for the harm or the shame).

[46]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[47]Cf. (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers, in which two clerics who have run into a bad year decide not to beg because of the shame they would have, both for their order and for themselves: "Honte avroient de lor pain querre,/Tant por lor ordre et tant por el" (ll. 14-16 B). A similar use of *avoir honte* occurs in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, in which a knight who has found out about his wife's adulterous affairs tells her she should be ashamed to give orders to his men: "S'il vous membrast de vostre vie,/Honte eüssiez d'avoir baillie" (ll. 243-244: "If you thought about your life, you would be ashamed of giving orders...").

[48]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

shame").[49] Frequently it is paired with other terms indicative of feelings, such as "duel".[50]

In other instances the expression *avoir honte* indicates the state of being shamed. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, for instance, the priest's mistress says her heart grieves ("li cuers me deut" [l. 1019: "my heart grieves"]) from the shame she has suffered ("De la honte que j'ai eüe" [l. 1020: "from the shame I have had"); the feeling she experiences is encapsulated in the expression "li cuers me deut," while *avoir honte* expresses the state. In (124) Trubert, the expression *avoir honte* indicates the state of shame that will be endured if vengeance is not taken. The duke's men say they will have great shame ("Grant honte i avrons et grant let" [l. 1016: "We will have great shame and outrage"]) if they do not avenge the duke's injuries. The young wife in (4) Auberee uses the expression *avoir honte* to describe the shame she suffers in being kicked out of the house by her husband:

> Et dist que ja Deu ne pleüst
> Qu'ele menjast jusqu'el seüst
> Por quoi ele a tel honte eüe. (ll. 313-315)
>
> And she said that may it please God that she not eat until she knew why she had had such shame.[51]

The word *honte* occurs in numerous other contexts indicative of the state of shame. Typical is (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, in which the countess states that she would willingly sleep with the visiting knight, regardless of the shame. Her only fear is her husband:

> G'i alasse mout volentiers,
> Ja nel laissasse por la honte--
> Ne fust por mon seignor le conte,
> Qui n'est encor pas endormiz. (ll. 392-395)
>
> I would go there very willingly, I would never not do it on account of the shame, were it not for my husband the count who is not yet asleep.

Honte is for her a state (and one she would gladly risk). Similarly in (17) Les Braies au Cordelier, the *conteur* states that an adulterous wife must be wily so as to hide her *honte*: "Bien covient qu'el saiche mentir/ Tel ore por covrir sa honte" (ll. 14-15: "She must know how to lie many times in order to hide her shame"). Again, *honte* is the state into which the adulterous wife

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[49]See also (5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse l. 78; (14) Aloul l. 429; (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 226.

[50](2) Constant du Hamel ll. 704, 734.

[51]See also (2) Constant du Hamel l. 116; (4) Auberee l. 400; (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux l. 390.

has fallen.[52] As a state, *honte* is something to which one can be put ("à grant honte mis"),[53] something to which one can go ("aller à honte"),[54] something which can come upon someone ("honte li venir"),[55] something one can pursue ("pourcachier sa honte"),[56] and something one can seek ("venire querre sa honte").[57]

The expression *male honte* appears only in curses, such as, "May God give me *male honte*" [(61 Brifaut l. 77: "...me doint Dieus male honte"], "May God grant you *male honte* [(43) La Male Honte ll. 146-147: "Je pri dieu.../ Que male honte vous otroit! "] or "May God send him *male honte*" [(25) La Damoiselle qui sonjoit l. 42: "Deus male honte li envoit..."). The curse was obviously of sufficient gravity that the king in (43) La Male Honte orders a peasant beaten and finally commands that he be put to death when he repeatedly appears at court telling him to receive or take "la male honte."

3. Honteus

The adjective *honteus* is generally used to convey the feeling of shame experienced by characters after their wrongdoing is exposed.[58] In (120) Le Sentier battu, for instance, the lady is described as "forment honteuse" (l. 83) when her slatternly ways are revealed to a group during the course of a question and answer game. When the relatives of the blacksmith in (77) Connebert refuse to help him take vengeance against the priest who has cuckolded him, he denounces then in turn, saying that they are all cuckolds for failing to take action and avenge the wrong done. Many of them are described as departing from their meeting with him "tuit honteus:

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[52]Other examples are: 1) Estormi l. 117; (4) Auberee l. 382; (13) Le Vilian Mire, l. 373; (25) La Damoisele qui sonjoit l. 67; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 267; (77) Connebert l. 305; (81) Le Prestre teint ll. 55, 172, 211; (83) La Dame escoillee ll. 17, 220; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 450, 739, 999.

[53](56) Frere Denise l. 255.

[54](34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 25; (100) Le Vallet qui d'Aise a Malaise se met l. 22.

[55](2) Constant du Hamel l. 477. In (125) Le Moigne, l. 37, the expression "honte li avenir" is used.

[56](103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 984-985, 1021-1022.

[57](81) Le Prestre teint l. 134.

[58]Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

"Et si i ot assez de ceus/ Qui s'an tornerent tuit honteus" (ll. 85-86: And there were many of them who left all ashamed"). The word *honteus* is often paired with other words indicative of strong feeling, such as "mas"[59] and "corouciez."[60] In one instance in the fabliaux *honteus* is used in the expression "faire honteus" and appears to convey the same meaning as *faire honte*, indicating the act of injuring another.[61] The term appears in (71) Le Couvoiteus et l'Envieus, but its use may be due to the needs of meter and rhyme:

> Que covoitise si est tieus
> Qu'ele fait maint home honteus:
> Covoitise prestre a usures
> Et fait recouper les mesures
> Por covoitier d'avoir plus aise. (ll. 19 - 23)
>
> For covetousness is such that she shames many men; she lends at usurious rates, and uses false measures on account of immoderately desiring to obtain goods more easily.[62]

The word *honteus* frequently conveys the sense of shyness or reluctance to speak one's mind or make a request.[63] Typical of this usage is the situation in (105) Les Sohais in which the good peasant is embarrassed to make a wish:

> Li prodom, qui en Deu se fie,
> Qui n'estoit mie covoiteus

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[59](39) Le Vilian qui conquist Paradis par Plais ll. 46-47; (115) Les Braies le Priestre l. 85.

[60](9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne l. 325.

[61]Godefroy.

[62]In Ms B, the word *honteus* is not used; instead, actual injuries which can result from covetousness are described:

> Covoitise preste a seure,
> Et fait recoper la mesure,
> Homes en batailles perir,
> Nes deus fait ele relanquir.
> Couetise fait l'ome prendre
> L'autrui don ele lo fait pandre,
> Et il en cuide auoir plus aise. (B ll. 19 - 25)
>
> Covetousness lends with guarantees, and uses false measures, makes men perish in battle, even relinquish God. Covetousness makes one man steal from another, on account of which she makes him hang, and he thinks he'll possess things more easily.

The injuries described here are all shameful ones and hence convey the same sense as *faire honte*.

[63]Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

Et del rover estoit honteus... (ll. 13-15)
The good man who trusts in God, who was not at all covetous, and who was embarrassed to ask...[64]

The word *honteus* also conveys a sense of intense embarrassment. The proud young girl in (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre II who faints upon hearing the word "foutre" spoken is described with the words: "vers homes est trop honteuse/Qant parolent de lecherie" (ll. 72-73: "Towards men she is too embarrassed when they speak of lechery"). The newlywed Robins in (10) Jouglet is said to be *honteus* on his wedding night (l.127 A) because he does not know what to do. The word *honteusement* is similarly used to describe the embarrassment of the bishop in (99) L'anel qui faisoit les vis grans et roides when he reveals his mysterious affliction, a greatly oversized erect penis, to his men: "Li evesques honteusement/ Moutre s'aventure a sa gent" (ll. 27-28: "The bishop with great embarrassment reveals his misfortune to his men").

It is important to note that embarrassment is not necessarily the equivalent of shame. According to anthropologists and psychologists, embarrassment does not entail the negative evaluation of the self and the perceived decline in status that is central to the experience of shame. Rather, embarrassment consists of anxiety over exposure, and most typically exposure of the "naked" self, however "naked" is defined in a given culture.[65] This anxiety becomes shame only when the exposure leads to a negative evaluation of the self. Hence in the examples just cited, the young girl in (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre feels embarrassment, and embarrassment alone, in hearing the word "foutre" spoken. The word arouses her anxiety over sexuality, but does not in itself cause shame. In the other two instances, again both pertaining to exposure of sexuality, an element of shame is likely present. Robins in (10) Jouglet undoubtedly could feel shame over his ignorance (in fact he is feeling sick), and the bishop in (99) L'anel qui faisoit les vis grans et roides likely feels shame over his heightened sexuality, something not befitting a religious with the status of bishop.

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[64]See also (4) Auberee l. 174 and (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 941.

[65]Susan Miller, The Shame Experience (Analytic Press, 1985) 33-34, 38-43, 124-128; A.L. Epstein, The Experience of Shame in Melanesia: An Essay in the Anthropology of Affect, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Occasional Paper 40 (London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1984) 40.

4. Hontage

The word *hontage* appears to be identical in meaning to the word *honte*.[66] It appears in expressions such as *faire hontage*[67] and *avoir hontage*[68] just like the word *honte*. In most instances it is applied to acts of sex outside of marriage, to describe the shame suffered by either the wife or the husband,[69] though it is also used to indicate embarrassment at speaking one's mind.[70] It also appears in the expression "tenir à hontage" to describe how others would view one woman striking another and hence is indicative of the state of shame.[71] It is revealing to note that the word *hontage* occurs only as the last word in a line; its use appears to be dictated primarily by the needs of meter and rhyme and not by any unique sense it conveys.

5. Ahonter

The word *ahonter* appears three times in the fabliaux in the form of the past participle *ahonté*.[72] It is used to describe cuckolding[73] and the act of publicly tricking a group so as to reveal their greed to others.[74] As with *hontage*, it occurs only as the last word in a line.

* * *

The Semantic Network of Honte/Honir

The web of meanings attached to the various words in the *honte* and *honir* family are

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66Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

67(81) Le Prestre teint ll. 48, 156; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 546.

68(103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 900; (118) Le Jugement l. 8.

69See for example (14) Aloul l. 396; (69) Les Tresces II l. 305; (106) Le fol Vilain l. 185.

70(118) Le Jugement l. 8.

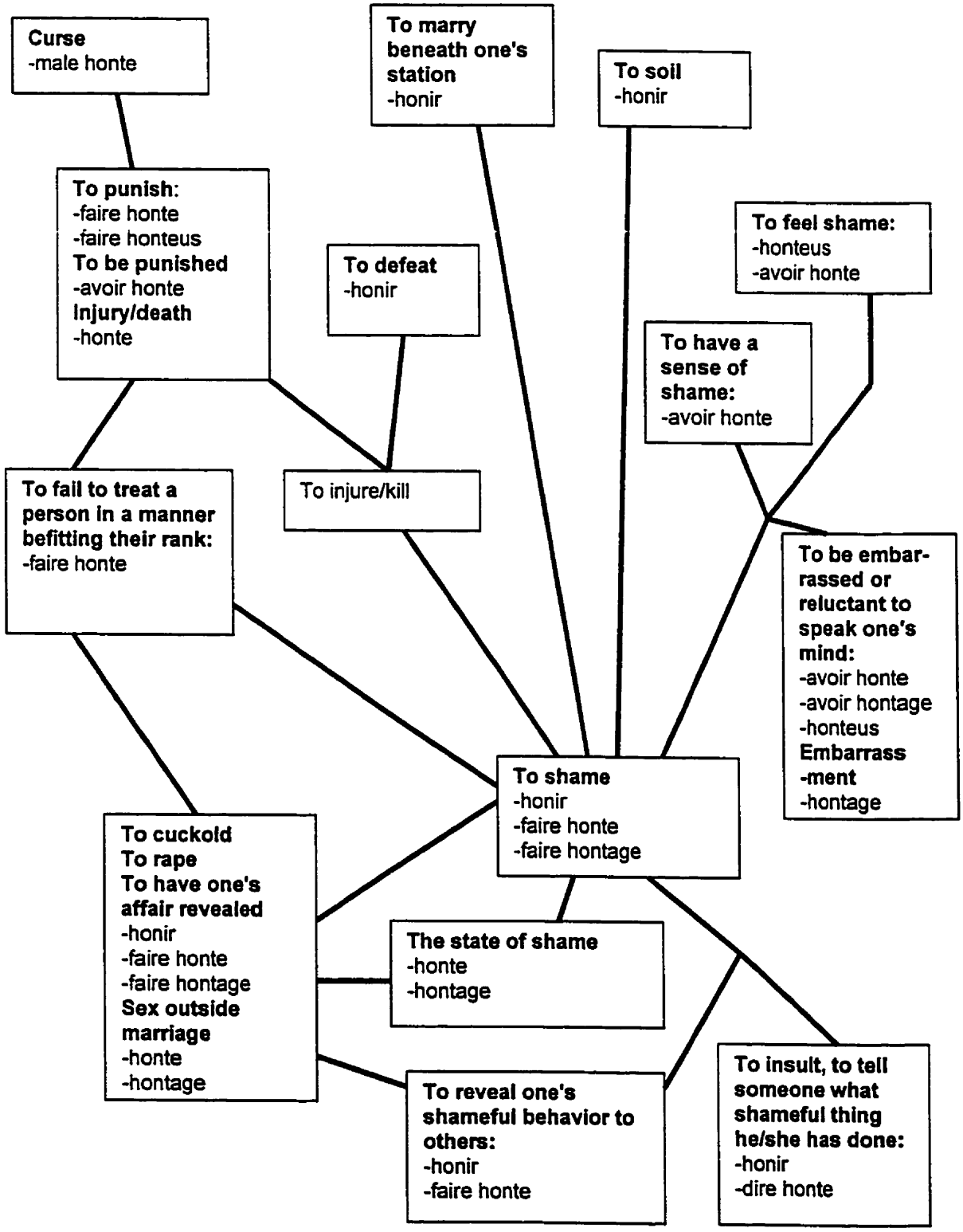
71(81) Le Prestre teint l. 157.

72Godefroy and Greimas define it as ""couvrir de honte; insulter." Tobler-Lommatzsch define it as "to bring into shame."

73(103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 521; (115) Les Braies le Priestre l. 113.

74(127) Le Vescie a Prestre l. 293.

Figure 2.1: The Semantic Network of Honte/Honir



illustrated in Figure 2.1. The relationships that can be drawn between the various terms and concepts are revealing. Cuckolding a man is insulting because it entails a failure to treat a man in a manner befitting his status, since it implies that the man does not exert proper control over his wife. Raping a woman similarly implies a failure to treat a woman in a manner befitting her status; it implies that she is not a "bone fame." Speaking or verbalizing what is shameful is an insult, if told to the perpetrator's face, and causes shame in the sense of a diminution in that person's status if told to others. The act of verbalizing is key to both; both are described by the term *honir*. To feel shame, to be embarrassed or reluctant to speak one's mind, and to have a sense of shame are all related sentiments; all are expressed by the term *avoir honte*. To injure or kill someone entails the wounded party being betrayed or defeated; both injury and defeat are expressed by the term *honir*. When administered as punishment for wrongdoing, injuring or putting someone to death likewise causes shame.

As should be plainly evident, the words *honte* and *honir* are what anthropologists would describe as "core terms," key terms in the culture with polyvalent symbolic meanings. The web or semantic network illustrating their numerous meanings and the links between concepts will serve as the basis for constructing the semantic network for other terms indicative of shame as defined by social scientists.

B. Deshonor, Deshonorer

Words of the *honte* and *honir* family make up the bulk of the expressions in the fabliaux indicating the experience of shame. Occurring more rarely are the noun *deshonor* and, even more rarely, the verb *deshonorer*.[75] Both are indicative of shame as defined above.[76] The term with which *deshonor* is most frequently paired is *honte*.[77] Both *deshonor* and *deshonorer* are

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[75]*Deshonorer* occurs only in (77) Connebert l. 69.

[76]See Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[77](93) Guillaume au Faucon l. 541. In (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, the wife scolds her adulterous husband using the words *honte* and *deshonor*: "Biau sire, a mout grant desonour/ Usez votre vie les moi!/ N'avez honte?" (ll. 22-24: "Lord, you are passing your life with me in great dishonor! Have you no shame?"). In (14) Aloul, the lecherous priest who faces certain castration from the cowherds bent on avenging their cuckolded master fears they will make him live "à deshonor," à vergoingne", and "à grant honte:"

Car il entent et voit tres bien
Que, s'il le tienent a delivre,
A deshonor le feront vivre,
A grant vergoingne et a grant honte. (ll. 630-633)

applied to characters who experience a diminution of their status: husbands who are cuckolded, wives who are propositioned by other men, a woman whose husband maintains a mistress, a man who seems to have lost his mind, and an upright peasant accused of theft.

Expressions which indicate an absence of *honor*, such as "[il] son enor pert" [(77 Connebert l. 46: "He loses his honor") and "[il] n'est honnourez" [(52) Le Vilain au Buffet l. 257: "He is not honored") are likewise indicative of shame. Again, such expressions are frequently linked to words of the *honte* and *honir* family. The wife in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, for instance, relates in her deathbed confession that the household in which the wife makes herself lord will never be honored but rather is shamed:

> Ne ja ostel n'ert a honor
> Dont la dame se fet seignor...
> ...Por c'est honie
> Mainte meson..." (ll. 201-202; 206-207)
>
> That house will never be honored where the wife makes herself lord... For this reason many a home is shamed...

Honor and shame are directly contrasted in (83) La Dame escoillee, in which the father instructs his daughter to obey her husband, the count, if she wishes to avoid *honte* and have *honor*:

> ..."Fille, entendez!
> Se vos honeur avoir volez,
> Cremez vostre seignor le conte,
> Se nel faites, c'ert vostre honte." (ll. 217-220)

> For he understands and sees very well that, if they seize him, they will make him live in dishonor, in great disgrace and in great shame.

Cf. (83) La Dame escoillee, in which the *conteur* states that wives should honor their husbands; if not, the husbands are shamed and dishonored:

> ...chier tenir et bien amer,
> Et obëir et onorer:
> S'eles ne font, ce est lor honte.
> Huimais descendrai en mon conte
> De l'essanple que doi conter,
> Que cil doivent bien escouter
> Qui de lor femes font seignor,
> Dont il lor avient deshenor. (ll. 15-22)
>
> ...hold them dear and love them well, obey and honor them; if they do not do this, it is their shame. Today I will tell my story of the example which I should tell, that they may listen well who make their wives their lord, on account of which dishonor comes to them.

If you wish to have honor, fear your lord the count; if you do not it will be to your shame.[78]

Indicating an absence of honor, such expressions always imply that decline in status that indicates the experience of shame. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier this sense of diminished status is explicit: the squire urges the knight to take steps to keep his horse so that he may ride home "à honnour," and not on foot like a traitor or fool:

"...s'en irés
Demain en vo tere a cheval.
Je n'avrai ja duel si coural
Se jou vous suic trestout à pié,...
Se n'irés mie comme faus,
Ne com bricons, mais à honnour!" (ll. 803-806, 809-810)

"If you will return to your land tomorrow on horseback, I will never have such heartfelt grief if I follow you on foot... You will not go like a traitor, nor a fool, but in honor."

Similarly, the knight in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons tells the squire that they would have lost honor throughout the world if they had stolen the clothes belonging to the three women bathing in the fountain; being crippled (and hence a person of very low status) would be preferable to losing their honor:

Huez, cil ne gaaigne mie
Qui fait conquest par vilenie,
Ainz pert honor par tot le monde;
Ja mais ne beau dit ne beau conte

---

[78]In ms. E , which tends to amplify the narrative and go into more detail, the *honor/honte* dichotomy is mentioned in another admonition the father makes to his daughter:

"Se uos honor auoir uolez
Cremez uostre seignor le conte
Si que nus ne die honte
Soiez toz iors a son acort
Se nel fetes uos aurez tort,
Et s'en serez par tot blamee." (ll. 252-257 E)

If you wish to have honor, fear your lord the count, so that no one may say shameful things to you. Always be in accord with him; if you are not, you will be wrong, and you will be blamed for it everywhere.

See also (17) Les Braies au Cordelier, in which the adulterous wife, knowing her husband has discovered evidence of her adultery, plots how to change her shame into honor:

Quant fu grant eure et grant jorz,
Por changier sa honte a hennor,
S'en vint a un Frere Menor... (ll. 239-241)

When it was late morning and broad daylight, in order to change her shame to honor, she went to a Franciscan brother...

Nen ert de lui a cort retret.
Mielz vosisse estre contret
Que ge t'eüsse orainz creü:
Mon los eüsse descreü
Et avillié, au mien semblant! (ll. 325-324)

Hugh, he does not gain anything who gains booty through vilainy, rather he loses honor everywhere. Never will a beautiful tale or story be told of him in court. I would prefer to have been crippled, than to have believed you just now [when you recommended that we steal their clothes]: my reputation would have declined and been vilified, in my opinion!

The meaning of expressions indicating an absence of honor can be understood by appreciating what *honor* itself meant. The meaning of *honor*, *honorer*, and *faire honorer* in the fabliaux appears to be identical to their meaning as delineated by Robreau in her analysis of the Lancelot-Grail cycle.[79] Essentially, the terms describe noble behavior and noble status. The word *honor* can refer to military prowess and success on the battlefield[80] and, by extension, a glorious reputation for military deeds.[81] In its inner sense, it can refer to actions in keeping with the ethical code of conduct for the nobility, e.g., loyalty and bravery.[82] The expressions *honor*, *honorer* and *faire honor* are used most widely, both in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle and in the fabliaux, to indicate the marks of consideration shown to people of worth. Rituals of reception and celebratory feasts[83] are thus forms of *honor*, as is bestowing clothing[84] or other forms of material wealth[85] and showing guests hospitality.[86] In the sense of "to show

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[79]Robreau 25-70.

[80]See for example (50) Les deus Chevaus l. 189; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 24.

[81]See for example (12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille l. 16; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 147.

[82]See for example (83) La Dame escoillee l. 27; (53) Le sot Chevalier l. 26.

[83](124) Trubert l. 1354.

[84](124) Trubert l. 2154.

[85](83) La Dame escoillee l. 210; (111) Le Testament de l'Asne l. 61; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 443.

[86](18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville ll. 62 H or 64A or 62 T, 143; (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 266, 84 M, 119 M, 156 M;(83) La Dame escoillee l. 180; (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son

consideration", the word *honorer* is most often coupled with the verb "servir"[87] and the expressions "faire bonté,"[88] "bien amer"[89] and "tenir chier."[90] To show consideration to another honors not only that person but also oneself.[91]

In the fabliaux, the terms are applied to situations that do not pertain just to the nobility or behavior expected of nobles. To maintain one's parents in proper fashion, feeding and clothing them well, is described by *honor*.[92] For women in the fabliaux,[93] *honor* consists in getting married.[94] Women preserve their honor, and that of their husbands, by remaining faithful.[95] They honor their husbands by obeying them.[96] The expression "dame de honor" refers to women who are faithful and do not cuckold their husbands.[97]

Compere de noier l. 14; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 298, 391; (114) La Gageure l. 106. In (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, the butcher says that a king would be honored (l. 258: "...uns rois en seroit honorez!") if he slept with a woman as beautiful as the priest's mistress.

87(15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 266; (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier l. 14; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 391.

88(18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville ll. 62 H or 64A or 62T; (111) Le Testament de l'Asne l. 61.

89(34) Berengier au lonc Cul ll. 102-103 A; (114) La Gageure ll. 105-106.

90(34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 103 A; (83) La Dame escoillee ll. 568-569.

91(52) Le Vilain au Buffet ll. 256-257; (83) La Dame escoillee ll. 298-299.

92(16) La Housse partie I l. 249; (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force ll. 33, 53, 138.

93While Robreau does not discuss *honor* as it applies to women, what constitutes honor for women in the fabliaux is in fact very similar to what it is for women in German epic literature. According to Siegfried Christoph, "Honor, Shame and Gender," Arthurian Romance and Gender. Selected Proceedings of the XVIIth International Arthurian Congress, ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995) 26-33, women in German epic literature were not able to take action to obtain honor; instead they were the passive holders of it. Honor for women derived from possessing the qualities of beauty, faithfulness, and modesty.

94(23) Le Jugement des Cons l. 5; (100) Le Vallet qui d'Aise a Malaise se met l. 44; (124) Trubert l. 2676.

95(1) Estormi l. 71; (74) Le Sacristain III l. 175; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 774.

96(34) Berengier au lonc Cul ll. 102-103 A; (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 245; (83) La Dame escoillee ll. 16, 218.

97(113) Le Chevalier a la Corbeille l. 6. See also (59) Le Foteor, where the line "Voir d'aucune sanz anor" (l. 180) can be interpreted in two different ways, depending on who utters the line. If it is

Anthropologists writing on shame frequently speak of honor and shame as opposites.[98] In the fabliaux themselves, as seen in the examples just cited from (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse and (83) La Dame escoillee, the terms *honte* and *honor* are opposed to one another. However, an analysis of the contexts in which the terms appear in the fabliaux suggests that the words *deshonor* and *deshonorer* are not just the opposite of *honor*. Rather, they appear to be synonyms of *honte*. Similar to what Robreau found in her analysis of the same terms in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle, the words *deshonor* and *deshonorer* in the fabliaux appear in all the same types of situations in which the words *honte* and *honir* appear.[99] Robreau notes that the words have a concrete sense, often designating the material consequences of being shamed. In one fabliau *deshonor* appears to designate castration,[100] but otherwise *deshonor* and *deshonorer* in the fabliaux do not generally appear to have a concrete sense. They are applied most often to the act of cuckolding a man or propositioning his wife. In (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, for instance, the *conteur* states that the cleric initially refrains from having an affair with the lady of the house and thereby doing her dishonor: "...il suht k'il eust fait tel deshonur/ Ke de sa femme eust fet folie... (ll. 96-97: "...He knew that if he did such dishonor as to do folly with [the lord's] wife...")[101] The terms are also applied to situations which are not the

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the *foteor* who utters it, the line means he serves no woman if not in an honorable fashion. If it is the wife who says it, the line means that he serves no woman of honor, that is, no woman who is faithful to her husband. The editors of the NRCF assign this line to the wife. More common than the expression "dame de honour" is the expression "bone dame," which is used to refer to obedient and/or faithful wives. See for example (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, in which the cleric initially decides not to speak to the wife about his love for her, "Kar bone dame la saveit,/ Et dotout molt le [sien] seignur" (ll. 94-95: "For he knew she was a good lady, and he greatly feared her husband"). The expressions "gentil femme" and "preudefame" have the same sense. See for example (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 546 and (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 243.

98J. G. Peristiany, "Introduction," Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society, ed. J.G. Peristiany, The Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) 1-20. Epstein, pp. 10-11, 18, 39-40, and 49, emphasizes that shame and honor are opposite sides of the same coin. Kurt Riezler, "Comment on the Social Psychology of Shame," The American Journal of Sociology 48.4 (1943), notes that, "Behind every pudendum is hidden a venerandum..." (p. 464).

99Robreau 142-144.

100(14) Aloul l. 632.

101See also (17) Les Braies au Cordelier l. 195; (77) Connebert l. 69; and (93) Guillaume au Faucon l. 541.

opposite of situations described by the term *honor* in the fabliaux. In (2) Constant du Hamel, the good peasant Constant describes himself as being "a tel desanor" (l. 294) after he is accused of stealing some wheat. In (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, as we have just seen, the knight tells his squire that they would have lost honor (in the sense of a good reputation) if they had stolen the clothes of the three women they encounter in the fountain (l. 327). The bourgeois wife in (69) Les Tresces II whose husband has apparently gone mad, falsely accusing her of adultery and cutting off the tail of an ass while insisting he has cut off her hair instead, says that her husband "se demaine a deshenor" (l. 400: "behaves dishonourably"). The constant in all of these usages appears not to be a reference to a lack of honor defined by noble standards, but to a decline in status, whether this be for peasants, bourgeois, or nobles.

Interestingly, the word *honor* in the fabliaux is often employed in an ironic fashion. For example, when the wife in (14) Aloul is publicly accused of adultery by her husband, she denounces him for bringing her such *honor*:

> "Diex, com puis ore avoir grant joie,"
> Fet la dame, "de tel seignor
> Qui me porte si grant honor!
> Honis soit or tels mariages,
> Et honis soit li miens parages,
> Qui a tel homme m'ont donee!" (ll. 430-435)
>
> "God, how I can now have great joy," says the lady, "From such a lord who brings me such great honor! Shame on such marriages, and shame on my relatives, who gave me to such a man!"

Similarly, the young girl in (56) Frere Denise is said to have more "honor" after being properly wed to a nobleman than when, disguised as a friar, she lived as the concubine of the lascivious Friar Simon: "[ele] fu a mout plus grant honeur/ Qu'en abit de frere meneur" (ll. 335-336: "She was in a much more honorable state than when she had been in a friar's habit"). The word *honor* in such situations underlines its own absence.[102]

In many instances in the fabliaux the words *honor* or *honorer* are employed in situations in which the characters concerned are eventually shamed. In (95) Le Prestre et la Dame, for instance, the wife tells the priest to stay for dinner because it would do her husband "honor" "Si li faites itant d'ennor!" (l. 88: "And do him such honor"). The priest, who is the wife's lover, does anything but honor the husband. After the meal, when the husband is sufficiently inebriated, the priest and the wife have intercourse in his presence. Likewise in (60) Le Chapelain the two

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[102]See also (95) Le Prestre et la Dame l. 129.

fishermen who find a huge bundle lodged in their nets and think that it must contain some expensive clothing expect that, when sold, the clothing will allow them to live honorably for the rest of their lives:

> "Que Dieus nos a hui regardez,
> Car nos avons hui gaagnié
> Dont toz jorz mes serons soignié
> A ennor, tant com nos vivrons!" (ll. 113-116)
> "For God has looked upon us today, for we have obtained something today from which we will be provided for always in honor, as long as we will live."

The bundle contains not the hoped-for riches, though, but the body of a chaplain, the discovery of which leads to a public trial by combat between the two fishermen to ascertain who is responsible for the murder. The great find which they had hoped would bring them honor brings instead the public humiliation of a trial by combat before a huge crowd. Virtually every benediction entailing a request for honor, benedictions which could be regarded as relatively meaningless formulaic statements designed to meet the requirements of meter or rhyme, are in fact directed at characters who are shamed. For instance, the husband in (102) Le Prestre comporté who knows his wife is hiding a lover on the premises says, upon seeing a meal laid out upon his (unexpected) arrival home: "Que Dieus joie et hounour vous prest!/ Ves me chi le mangier tout prest!" (ll. 118-119: "May God give you honor and joy! See the meal all ready here!"). The wife in (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers who aids her husband in stealing from the two clerics who come to their mill to grind their flour, and who eventually is tricked into sleeping with one of the clerics, tells the cleric, when he asks where his companion is, "Sire, si aie je hanor,/ Il en vait querre mon seignor... (ll. 87-88 B: "Sir, as I may have honor, he went to look for my husband..."). The knight in (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame who asks the husband to get his wife to forgive him, thereby getting him to participate in his own cuckolding, asks God to give the husband honor and joy:

> "Que Deus des ciaus enor et joie
> Et de ses biens assez vos doint:
> Proiez qu'ele lo me pardoint..." (ll. 212-214)
> "May the God of the heavens give you honor and joy, and enough of his goods: ask her to forgive me [my misdeed]."

So too the little boy in (63) Celui qui bota la Pierre II who has just witnessed the priest sleeping with his mother greets his father upon his arrival home with the words: "Biaus peres, Deus vos saut,/ Et doint joie et enneur vos face!" (ll. 80-81: Dear father, may God save you and give you

joy and do you honor!).[103] Thomas Cooke in his study of the comic climax in the fabliaux notes that tag lines and formulaic lines are often just filler in the fabliaux, but are occasionally used to prepare for the comic climax.[104] Formulaic references to honor in the fabliaux clearly play such a role.

C. Vilain

The noun *vilain*, the adjective *vilain* and the noun *vilenie* are discussed at some length by Robreau.[105] Etymologically, the word *vilain* originally referred to a serf who held his land in tenure from a lord and owed various services and rents in return. Because of the scorn with which the noble class viewed the serfs, and due also to the influence of the phonetically similar but etymologically distinct word *vil*, meaning vile, mean or base, the word *vilain* acquired a negative connotation, signifying that which lacked finesse and elegance, that which was ugly, both physically and morally, and, in short, everything which was not noble or "courtois."[106]

While the noun *vilain* does not always convey these negative associations and can simply be an indication of class, certainly the peasant class was frequently characterized in very negative terms in the fabliaux.[107] In some fabliaux the word *vilian*, while indicating class, is employed

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103See also (4) Auberee l. 515 (Aubereé is playing the shameful role of go-between); and (56) Frere Denise l. 50.

104Thomas Cooke, The Old French and Chaucerian Fabliaux: A Study of Their Comic Climax (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1978) 72-77.

105Robreau 181-197. See also Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

106Robreau 181.

107The peasant in (39) Le Vilian qui conquist Paradis par Plait is refused admittance to heaven solely on the basis of his class. The insults which the seneschal in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet hurls at the peasant who has come to his lord's feast, as well as the newly wed wife's lament in (10) Jouglet at being married to a peasant, provide good examples of the negative characterization of peasants in the fabliaux. Peasants are the object of particularly virulent attacks in Rutebeuf's fabliaux, especially (55) Le Pet au Vilain, and also in Le Chevalier, les Clers et les Vilains, a work generally not considered a fabliaux. Gregg Lacy in his paper "Vilenie as a Source of Social Humor in the Fabliaux," delivered at the 20th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1985, drew attention to the negative characterization peasants generally receive in the fabliaux. They are ugly, socially and morally inferior, duped and expendable. Per Nykrog, Les Fabliaux: Etude d'histoire littéraire et de stylistique médiévale (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1957), pp.127-129, notes that peasants are sometimes sympathetic characters if they are clever and do not attempt to rise above their station. See also Omer Jodogne, Le Fabliau, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975) 27.

only to cast aspersions on a character. In (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier, for instance, the man who lost his eye calls the fisherman who accidentally put it out a *vilain*: "Cist vilains m'a mon ueil crevé" (l. 19: "This peasant has put out my eye"); other characters or the *conteur* refer to the man either as *preudome* (ll. 52, 65) or *pescheor* (l. 1). So too the wife in (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine refers to her husband, also a fisherman, as a *vilein* after he tells her he was castrated. She tells her chambermaid to gather up the biggest beans in preparation for leaving him: "Ja n'en lessase une au vilein,/ Se j'en peüsse tot porter!" (ll. 156-157: I would never leave one to the peasant, if I could carry them all!"). Again, this is the only instance in the fabliaux in which the word *vilain* is used to describe the husband; it captures his diminished status in the eyes of his wife. In (19) La Borgoise d'Orliens the *conteur* refers to the lady's husband as "son vilein" after the lady realizes her husband is trying to lay a trap for her:

> Fames ont mout le sens agu,
> Eles ont meint homes dechu;
> Si fera ceste son vilein:
> Metre le fera en pelein
> Et li fera un mal joel. (ll. 117-121)
>
> Women have a sharp wit, they have deceived many men; so will this one [deceive] her peasant: she will put him in a painful situation and give him a bad present.

The husband is in fact a merchant, and elsewhere in the fabliaux is referred to as *borjois*. His behavior in setting a trap for his wife is obviously what has merited this term.

The terms with which *vilain* is most commonly paired in the fabliaux are revealing. It is most commonly opposed to *courtois*[108] and *preudome*[109]. This parallels Robreau's finding that *vilain* in a general sense in the Lancelot-Grail cycle indicated that which was opposite to the nobility.[110] The most typical modifier of the noun *vilain* in the fabliaux is *faus*.[111] As loyalty was key to a noble person's honor in the Lancelot-Grail cycle, the frequency with which the modifier

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108(39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait ll. 60-61; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 185-186.

109(11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel I ll. 196-200; (42) Le Fevre de Creeil l. 76; (43) La Male Honte II ll. 150-151 B.

110Robreau 181-182.

111(39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait l. 55 A.

faus appears with the word *vilian* in the fabliaux again parallels Robreau's findings.[112] *Vilain* in the fabliaux is also often paired with *pautoniers* (scoundrel)[113] and *felon*.[114] Most frequently of all, *vilain* in the fabliaux is linked to terms indicating stupidity, such as *sot* and most especially *fol*. Phrases comprised of *vilain* and *fol*, or *vilain* and *sot*, are usually in the negative: characters such as the son in (16) La Housse partie are described as being neither *vilain* nor *fol*: "Et li vallés fols n'estoit mie,/ Ne vilains ne mal enseigniez" (ll. 40-41: "And the valet was not at all foolish, nor peasant-like, nor badly brought up").[115] While this type of phrasing is common in the Lancelot-Grail cycle as well (a knight for example is typically said not to be *vilain*, but to possess some other quality instead),[116] what distinguishes the fabliaux from the Lancelot-Grail cycle in this respect is the linking of the quality *vilain* with stupidity or foolishness.[117]

Not surprisingly, *vilain* and its derivatives are applied to a variety of situations which in one way or another could be described as un-courtly. To speak crudely or talk of sex is often termed *vilenie*. The wife in (42) Le Fevre de Creeil, for instance, says that her husband ought not speak to her of the size of their sergeant's virile member; she describes such talk as *vilenie*: "Tel honte ne tel vilonie/ Ne devroit nus preudom retrere!" (ll. 76-77: "Such shame and such villainy ought no good man speak of!").[118] The knight in (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier is said to speak "une grant vilanie" (l. 21) when, his beloved stretched out naked before him in the *asag*, or test of courtly love, he asks her in the crudest of terms if she would like to engage in sex. The father in (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre II tells David that he can not hire any

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112In the Lancelot-Grail cycle, the antonymic couple *vilain-courtois* is often found in situations in which the meaning is *vilain-loyal*. See Robreau 188.

113(18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville l. 92; (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche l. 14.

114(103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 107-108.

115See also (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 498; (34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 295; (43) La Male Honte II l. 154.4. In (47) Les trois Boçus, the wife calls the porter whom she has hired "sire fols vilains" (l. 171) when he asks payment for a job that he has seemingly not yet done. The use of the word "fols" may be ironical here as the porter in fact is being deceived by the wife.

116Robreau 182.

117See below, Chapter 4, for a discussion of stupidity as a source of shame in the fabliaux.

118Several lines later the wife uses the word "parler vilainement" to describe what her husband has said: "Certes, mout estes anieus/ Qui si parlez vilainement" (ll. 100-101: "Certainly, you are very troublesome, [you] who speak so villainously").

man to help around the farm because men are such *vilain* speakers: "Et trop sont vilain parleor" (l. 82: "And they are too crude speakers").[119] The adulterous wife in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse similarly describes men in general as *vilain* because, she explains to her confessor, men would consider their wives whores if women actually requested the payment of the marriage debt from their husbands every time they had the desire:

> Et li mari si sont vilain
> Et de grant felonie plain,
> Si ne nous oson descouvrir
> Vers aus, ne noz besoins gehir,
> Quar por putains il nous tendroient,
> Se noz besoins par nous savoient... (ll. 153-158)
>
> And husbands are so villainous and so full of wickedness that if we dare reveal to them or acknowledge our needs, they would deem us whores, if our needs were made known to them by us.[120]

Along similar lines, *vilenie* and related terms in the fabliaux are often applied to scatological contexts. Words of the *vilain* family are used to describe expulsions of intestinal gas, latrines, and, in one case, the act of kissing another person's posterior. In (32) Les trois Meschines II, for instance, Agace describes the misfortune in which an expulsion of intestinal gas has caused some face powder to fly away as a "vilain mesfet" (l.66) and says that the perpetrator has *vilainement* (l. 107) caused to powder to fly away.[121] A similar usage occurs in (74) Le Sacristain II, in which the prior, on seeing the sacristan apparently asleep in the abbey's latrine, says, "com est vileins/ Li sougretains qui ci se dort!" (ll. 426-427: "how villainous is the sacristan who sleeps here!"). The expression "tiele vylenynie" is used to describe the act of

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119The *conteur* of the same fabliau (ms. D) begins by saying that it is not *vilenie* to recount this fabliaux; its intent is just to amuse: "Ele n'est pas uilaine a dire/ Mais moz por la gent faire rire" (ll. 3-4 "It is not shameful to recount it, rather these are words to make people laugh.") In version II, the young man, David, responds when the father says the word *foutre* with the words "Si vilain mot ne devez dire!" (l. 88: "You ought not say such a villainous word").

120Men's proclivity to seek sex outside of marriage is similarly described as *vilain* in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, in which the chambermaid tells the visiting butcher,

> Dieus com cist home sont uilain.
> Laissié me em pais ostés uo main
> Je n'apris onques tel afaire... (ll. 212-214 H)
>
> God, how these men are villainous. Leave me in peace, take away your hand, I have never been accustomed to such an affair.

121See also (124) Trubert, in which Trubert's dinner companion protests that she is innocent of causing the explosive noise that has disturbed the duke's feast with the words, "Je ne fis hui ci vilenie!" (l. 543: "I did not do this villainous thing today!").

kissing someone's posterior in (114) La Gageure (l. 66).[122]

Other non-noble behaviors are also described with terms from the *vilain* family. Lack of hospitality is termed *vilenie* in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, in which the priest initially refuses to lodge the knight. The knight responds:

> A chevalier chevalerie,
> Et au clergiet afiert a estre
> Si com j'oï dire mon maistre!
> Se che nous faut, c'est vilonnie:
> Sourmonte honneurs et courtoisie. (ll. 182-186)

Chivalry is entrusted to the nobility and the clergy, as I've heard my master say. If it's lacking, it is villainy which surmounts honor and *courtoisie*.[123]

Also termed *vilenie* in the fabliaux are disloyalty [(39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait l. 30,[124] (14) Aloul l. 407[125]], failing to reward a good deed [(15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons (ll. 188-190)], paying back good with bad [(2) Constant du Hamel ll. 71-72], and refusing to give something to another which one's lord has granted to that person [(93) Guillaume au Faucon ll. 576-578]. The destitute knight in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, concerned

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[122]Cf. (124) Trubert, in which Trubert, posing as a woman and just married to a jealous duke, says that it would be *vilenie* if he accompanied her while she left the bedchamber in the night to urinate (l. 2871). Not wiping one's posterior after relieving oneself is described as *vilain* in (74) Le Sacristain II. Guillaume places a fistful of straw in the hand of the dead monk on the latrine because he is not *vilain*: "Guillaumes ne fu pas vileins:/ Un torchon fist, si li bouta/ Dedenz son poig..." (ll. 400-402: "Guillaume was not villainous: he made a bundle of straw, and placed it in his hand...").

[123]The butcher in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville who is refused lodging by the priest because he is a layman calls the priest *pautonnier* and *vileins* (l. 92). Similarly the visiting merchant Martin in (74) Le Sacristain II tells the stingy peasant's wife that there is no peasant in the country who would not treat him better than she has:

> "Il n'a en cest païs vilain
> Qui assez plus ne me prestast
> Et volentiers ne me donast,
> Tot autresi c'on çaienz fait!" (ll. 690-693)

"There is not a peasant in this country who would not lend me more, and more willingly give to me, completely other than how one does it here."

[124] This interpretation is possible only if one attributes the line, "Plus vilains de vos n'i puet estre!" to the peasant, rather than to St. Peter as the editors of the NRCF have done. The line makes more sense in the mouth of the peasant, especially if *vilain* is understood in the moral rather than the literal sense.

[125]The word *vilenie* in this instance also describes the act of assuming that a woman has cuckolded her husband when (so it is claimed) she has not.

with his noble reputation, claims it would be *vilenie* to steal the clothing of the three ladies bathing in the fountain (l. 154). To refuse to help another is termed *vilaine* [(93) Guillaume au Faucon ll. 46-47], as is (and with an eye towards parody) refusing to pay a prostitute for services rendered [(37) La vieille Truande l. 146].[126]

While *vilain* and its derivatives in both the Lancelot-Grail cycle and the fabliaux can simply be indications of class or the behaviors associated with the non-noble classes, *vilain* and its derivatives frequently denote the experience of shame and can be viewed as synonyms of the *honte/honir* family. Because they refer to behavior, characteristics or people of low social standing, they imply a decline in status when applied to persons of higher standing, or with pretensions to higher standing, and hence convey the notion of shame. In virtually all of the fabliaux just cited in which uncourtly behavior is termed *vilain* or *vilenie*, a sense of diminished status and hence of shame is implicit. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, for instance, the priest who fails to give free lodging to the knight as a priest should (and especially as a priest with noble pretensions like the priest in this fabliau should) is denounced both by the knight himself, as described above, and later by his own mistress. Her words to him make clear the sense of diminished status that is conveyed by *vilenie*:

> Certes partout je le desisse,
> Vo grant anui et vo contraire,
> Viellars quemuns et deputaire,
> Qui tel vilonnie fesistes
> Que vostre ostel escondesistes
> Par frankisse a un gentil homme! (ll. 1203-1208)
>
> Certainly, everywhere I would tell people about your great misery and your annoyance, common vile peasant, who would do such villainy, who would deny lodging through generosity to a noble man.

The words with which *vilain* and *vilenie* are paired also demonstrate their close connection to the concept of shame as defined above. In some fabliaux the terms are directly linked to many of the words and expressions from the *honte/honir* family. In (124) Trubert, for instance, the *conteur* uses the expression *faire vilenie* and the verb *honir* to describe what Trubert has done to the duke and king:

> Il leur a fet grant vilenie:

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[126]This is also termed *faus*. Cf. the prostitute Alison in (91) Le Prestre et Alison who says it is *vilenie* to tease a poor prostitute who has little money (ll. 153-155). She says this in response to someone who claims to have arranged a good marriage for her.

Honiz les a et deceüz;
Li niés au seigneur est penduz,
De quoi il est duel et domage. (ll. 2041-2044)

He did them much villainy: he shamed and deceived them; the nephew of the lord was hung, on account of which there was sorrow and loss.

In (81) Le Prestre teint, the loyal wife tells the priest beseeching her for her favors that she would never do such *vilenie* or *hontage* as to cuckold her husband:

La bone dame dist ja n'iert
Qu'ele face a son mari tort
-- S'el en devoit prendre la mort--
Ne vilanie ne hontage... (ll. 45-48)

The good woman said that it would never be the case that she would do wrong to her husband, nor villainy nor shame, even if she were to die instead...[127]

The various meanings of terms from the *vilain* family are apparent from the context. Often, as we saw above, the terms refer to uncourtly or peasant-like behavior. In other instances, like numerous expressions from the *honte/honir* family, *vilenie* (most especially) and also the modifier *vilain* can indicate cuckolding and sex outside of marriage.[128] Typical is the duke's words in (124) *Trubert*. When he comes upon a frightened maiden in Trubert's house (actually Trubert in disguise) he reassures her by saying, "Damoiselle, n'en doutez mie,/ Ja ne vos ferons vilenie" (ll. 2292-2293: "Young lady, do not be afraid at all, I will never do villainy to you").[129]

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[127]See also (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre, in which the cleric says he does not wish to share a bed with the peasant's daughter because she will seek *uilenie* from him and do him *honte* (ll. 120-123 III); (42) Le Fevre de Creeil in which the wife says a "preudome" ought not to speak of such *honte* and *vilonie* as the size of their sergeant's virile member (ll. 76-77); (106) Le fol Vilain in which the squire is said to have loved the wife "sans vilonie et sans hontage" (l. 185); and (107) Les deus Vilains in which the husband, believing himself to be cuckolded, tells his wife "Honit m'avés" (l. 139) and "Certes, ci a mout vilain giu" (l. 142: "Certainly here is a very villainous game").

[128]Robreau, p. 184, notes that in the Lancelot-Grail cycle sex outside of marriage is often described by *vilenie*.

[129]See also (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre l. 120 D; (106) Le fol Vilain l. 185; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 534; (124) Trubert l. 2473. In (37) La vieille Truande, the knight uses the word *vilenie* when he tells the noble man he encounters at the river crossing that he would never have sex with the old hag: "Mius ameroie estre pendus/K'eüsse fait tel vilonie!" (ll. 150-151: "I would rather be hanged than do such villainy"). *Vilenie* in this instance may refer not just to sex outside of marriage, but sex with an ugly hag, something which would diminish the knight's status in the eyes of the noble man and his company.

When applied to cuckolding, the *vilenie* is often said to be done to the husband. Hence the priest's mistress in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville who protests her fidelity to the priest (in fact she has slept with their overnight guest) claims that the guest did nothing that would lead to the priest's *vilenie*:

> Plus n'i parla ne plus n'i fist,
> Ne riens nule ne me requist
> Qui vos tornast a vilenie. (ll. 445-447)
>
> He did not do nor say anything more, nor request anything of me which would be to your shame.[130]

Robreau in her study of the Lancelot-Grail cycle notes that *vilenie* in some of the more religious texts is used to denote sin, most especially of a sexual nature.[131] In only one fabliau does a similar usage occur, but the sexual connotation is absent. In (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur, the *conteur* lists the types of people whose soul the devil seizes at death, ending his litany with the words:

> ...et gent assez
> Qui en vilain pechié manoient,
> Et en la fin pris i estoient. (ll. 52-54)
>
> ...and many people who dwelt in villainous sin and were taken in the end.

We saw above that the expression *faire honte* is used to indicate the act of physically punishing a person for some wrong done. Interestingly, *vilenie* and related terms are also used to describe beatings and physical injuries, but only when the person beaten is in fact not guilty of any wrongdoing. The fabliau (124) Trubert, in which a duke, guilty of no offense of any significance, is repeatedly deceived and beaten by the trickster Trubert, provides numerous examples. When Trubert tricks the duke and ties him to a tree in preparation to beating him, the duke protests, saying he never did *vilenie* to Trubert, and so Trubert should not in turn do any to him (l. 793). After being beaten, he says it would be *vilenie* if Trubert left him tied to the tree (ll. 850-851). The duke's men seek vengeance because he has been beaten *vilainement* (l. 1019).

130See also (81) Le Prestre teint l. 48; (107) Les deus Vilains l. 164; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk ll. 5-6. In this last instance, the *vilenie* accrues to the wife, not the husband. The *conteur* at the beginning of the tale states, "Sa femme estoit bone dame,/ De vilainie n'out unkes blame..." ("His wife was a very good lady,/ She never had blame for any villainy"). Other expressions used to describe cuckolding are "vilain giu" [in (107) Les deus Vilains l. 142];"vilain oeuvre" [in (74) Le Sacristain I l. 80]; "li faire vilain chapel" [in (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 237]; and "li servir vilainement" [in (34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 276].

131Robreau 191-192.

The duchess similarly terms the duke's misfortune a "trop vilain plet" (l. 1024). In a later episode, the duke orders Trubert, disguised as a doctor and administering a beating to him as part of a supposed cure, to stop the treatment or else his men will do him "grant vilenie" (l. 1292). The duke does not realize the doctor is Trubert; to have the doctor beaten would therefore be doing *vilenie* to a doctor simply trying to cure his patient. Words of the *vilain* family are used in the same way in other fabliaux. The peasant in (43) La Male Honte II, termed a "prodome" by a noble at the king's court, is said to be to be treated *vilainnement* when he is repeatedly beaten for shaming the king: "Sire," dist il, "Vilainnement/ Fetes demener cest preudon..." (ll. 150-151: "Sire," he said, "You treat this gentleman villainously..."). Likewise the priest in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville claims his mistress does him a "trop vilain saut" when she beats his maidservant, thereby showing him little esteem:

> Vos aués fait trop uilain saut
> Petit me prisiés et doutés
> Qui me maisnie me batés. (ll. 414-416 H)
>
> You have done a villainous turn: you esteem and fear me little,
> you who beat my household.

Indeed, implicit in all of these uses is the notion that beating someone indicates a lack of respect. The victim in all of these cases are at least *prodomes*, if not actually noble: a duke, a doctor, and a priest with noble pretensions. As discussed above, the failure to treat someone with the respect due their rank is also one of the senses of the expression *faire honte*.

Like *dire honte*, the expression *dire vilenie* also is used to describe insults. While the expression *dire honte* describes the act of telling a person to his or her face a specific shameful thing he or she has done, *dire vilenie* describes the act of insulting a person to his or her face concerning something he or she in fact has *not* done.[132] The *jongleur* in (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur, for instance, accuses Saint Peter of cheating at their game of dice. St. Peter vehemently denies the accusation and the two get in a fist fight, eventually prompting the *jongleur* to recant the accusation. The *jongleur* uses the expression *dire vilenie* to describe the false accusation: "-Sire, ge dis grant vilenie,/ Or me repent de ma folie" (ll. 283-284: "Sir, I said a very villainous

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[132]Robreau, pp. 182-183, notes that the sense of *vilain* in the Lancelot-Grail cycle in such expressions as "vilain mot," "vilain blasme," and "vilain reproche" is "that which dishonors." She equates the expressions *dire honte* and *dire vilenie*, distinguishing them only on the basis of *dire vilenie* having a "more concrete sense" and a stronger import (p. 190).

thing, now I repent of my foolishness").[133] The knight in (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier is similarly said to *dire vilenie* when he uses an obscene metaphor to ask his lady if she would like to have intercourse:

> Einz dist une grant vilanie:
> Demanda li à cele foiz:
> "Madame, croitriez vos noiz?"
> Ce li dist por li ramposner. (ll. 21-24)
>
> Rather he said a very villainous thing: he asked her at this moment: "My lady, will you break your nuts?" He said this to her to insult her.

In this instance, *vilenie* may also convey the sense of crude peasant-like speech which, as we saw above, can also be conveyed by *vilain* or *vilenie*. In all these usages of the expression *dire vilenie*, there is a sense that to insult someone without foundation was to act in non-noble fashion and show oneself to be *vilain*. The characters who say *vilenie* are all either the antagonists in the tale or, in the case of the *jongleur* in (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur, truly lower class. Like *faire vilenie*, the expression *dire vilenie* also indicated a lack of respect for another; the characters to whom one says *vilenie* are nobles, saints, *prodomes* or, what amounts to the same thing for women, virgins.

D. Vil, Vilté, Viltance, Vilment, Aviler

Terms deriving from the adjective *vil*, meaning vile, mean or base,[134] are often indicative of the experience of shame. Their precise meaning can be understood by appreciating the sense of the terms in those contexts which are not directly indicative of shame. Occasionally the terms refer simply to poverty. The bourgeois in (74) Le Sacristain III, for instance, wastes his inheritance and falls into *vilté*:

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[133]Similarly the good peasant in (105) Les Sohais, accused by his brother of having stolen in order to acquire his wealth, tells him to leave off his *vilenie*:

> "Et li prodom li a rové
> Qu'il laist ester se vilonie,
> Car trop i a de felonie..." (ll. 69-71)
>
> "And the good man asked him to leave off his villainy, for there was too much wickedness in it...").

Likewise, when the husband in (84) Gauteron et Marion accuses his new bride of not having been a virgin, she says to him, "Et vos fetes grant vilenie/ Et si me dites grant outrage..." (ll. 20-21: "And you do a very villainous thing and say a great outrage to me...").

[134]Godefroy; Greimas.

...li bourjois, par son fou sans,
Vandi trestot son erité,
Et si chaï en tel vité
Qui il n'avoit mes que despendre... (ll. 66-69)

The bourgeois, through his foolish wits, sold all his inheritance, and so fell in such poverty that he had nothing more to spend...

So too in (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne, the three blind men protest to the tavern keeper reluctant to serve them that he ought not consider them *vil* despite their shabby attire; they will still be able to pay their bill.

Ne nous tenés mie por vil
Se nous sommes si povrement! (ll. 82-83)
Nous paierons mieus que plus cointe,
Car nous volons asés avoir. (ll. 86-87)

Don't consider us vile, if we are so poorly! ... We will pay you better than those more elegant than us, for we want to have a lot.

The adjective *vil* can also indicate vile or filthy, as when the prior in (74) Le Sacristain II chides the sacristan for falling asleep in the abbey's latrine:

"Danz sogretain," dit le prior,
"Mielz vos venist or en dortor
Dormir que en ceste longaigne:
Honie soit vostre gaaigne,
Qui si vos a grant honte faite!
Ainçois me fust la cuisse fraite
Et le dos ars en un chauz feu
Que me dormisse en si vil leu!" (ll. 433-440)

"Sir sacristan," said the prior, "It would have been better if you had slept in the dormitory rather than in this latrine: shame on your gain, which has done you such shame! I would rather that my leg be broken and my back burned in a hot fire than that I sleep in such a vile place!

Even in its sense as vile or filthy, however, *vil* is associated with *honte*: the prior calls the sacristan a *vilain* for falling asleep in the latrine and employs the malediction "Honnie soit" to express his scorn. In (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, *vilement* is used twice; in both cases, it conveys a sense of filth (in this case, sexual filth) and also shame. In the first instance, the supposed maiden whose female pudenda have revealed to the visiting knight that she is not a virgin exclaims:

"Allas, fet ele, "Que vienk ycy?
Trop su honye ledement
E engyné vylement." (ll. 188-190 M)

"Alas," she said, "What's happening here? I am very dishonorably shamed and vilely tricked."

Later, after the pudenda of the countess is cleared of the cotton which prevents it from speaking, the pudenda explains to the knight why it was initially unable to speak, using the word *vilement* to describe how it was stuffed full of cotton: "Sire ie ne purroi verroiement/ Taunt fu estranglé vylement" (l. 273 M: "Sire, I was truly unable [to speak], I was so vilely strangled").

In referring to poverty and filth and applied to the upper classes, terms of the *vil* family describe that lowering of status which is the essence of shame. The verb *aviler* in particular, meaning "to debase, to degrade, to dishonor; to scorn, to insult,"[135] always implies that lowering of status which is the essential component of the experience of shame. Sometimes the term is applied to reputations, as in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, in which the knight tells his squire that if he had not returned the clothing of the three ladies bathing in the fountain that his reputation would have suffered: "Mon los eüsse descreü/ Et avillié, au mien senblant!" (ll. 332-333: "My reputation would have decreased and declined, in my opinion"). A good lineage is said to be degraded in (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, in which the *conteur* comments that when nobles marry their daughters to the sons of usurers, "Ensi lo bon lignage aville" (l. 24: "thus a good lineage is debased"). In several fabliaux an individual character himself is said to *s'aviler*.[136] In (69) Les Tresces II, for instance, a knight refuses to make use of a go-between to communicate with his beloved for fear that he would *s'aville* -- in other words, that his status as a courtly lover would be lessened:

> ...il n'en ose noise faire
> A nului qui soit de sa vile.
> Et di que chevaliers s'aville,
> Et de ses amors ne li chaut,
> Qui se fie et croit en richaut. (ll. 24-28 D)

He does not dare say anything about it to anyone from her village, and says that the knight who believes and puts his trust in Richeut [a fictional character renowned as a panderer] debases himself and cares little about his loves.

The wife in (51) Les deus Changeors warns her lover to be cautious lest their affair become known to others by reminding him that he is not wise who knowingly *s'aville*, who knowingly decreases his status in the eyes of the others by revealing his sexual misconduct.

135Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

136Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

Il covient mener par esgart
Amors, qui les veut maintenir,
Que l'en nes puist por sos tenir;
Denn'est pas mes sires jalous?
Ainz avons entre moi et vous
Jusques ci nostre amor eüe,
C'onques par nul ne fu seüe:
La volez fere savoir?
Cil n'est mie plains de savoir
Qui tout a escient s'aville... (ll. 38-47)

Love must be handled cautiously by those who wish to maintain it, so that one can not consider them fools; is my lord jealous? We have kept our love between you and I until now so that it has never been known by anyone: do you want to make it known? He is not at all wise who knowingly debases himself.[137]

The husband in (102) Le Prestre comporté similarly tells his wife that if he stopped doing a particular chore just because she told him to, he would be *avilé*:

"Se vous le me desconselliés,
J'en seroie tous avilliés,
Chertes, se por cho le laisoie" (ll. 264-266)

"If you advise me against it, I would be completely dishonored, certainly, if I left it on account of that").

All the characters who fear being *avilé* are noble or bourgeois; the husband in (102) Le Prestre comporté, a wealthy peasant, is the only exception. For him, the threat of being *avilé* impinges not on his social status, but on his manliness; his wife's actions bespeak a lack of respect for her husband and are typical of a woman who cuckolds her husband.

Related to the sense of lowering, *aviler* can also indicate "to insult."[138] In that it describes an action which brings about shame, *aviler* in this context as well is indicative of the experience of shame. In (50) Les deus Chevaus, for instance, the monk protests to the peasant to whom he has offered to sell his horse that the peasant has insulted the beast. He uses the word *aviler* to describe the insult:

"Mout avez ore refusé,"
Fet li convers, "Et avillié
Mon roncin maigre et escillié,

137See also (107) Les deus Vilains, in which the husband tells the wife that, if her relatives and neighbors knew of her sexual misconduct, she and all her lineage would be "molt avillie" (ll. 145-146).

138Greimas.

Et le vostres fetes si preu!" (ll. 140-143)
"You have greatly rejected and put down my thin and mistreated horse," said the monk, "And made yours so valiant!"

Aviler indicates "to insult" also in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait, in which God says to the peasant who has reminded his apostles of their shortcomings in life,

"Mes apostles as blastengiés,
Et avilliés et ledengiés:
Comment cuides ci remanoir?" (ll. 127-129)
"You have blamed and put down and insulted my apostles! How do you think you're going to remain here?"[139]

When applied to a noble person, the adjective *vil*, like *vilain*, implies a lowering of status and hence the experience of shame. As noted by Robreau in her study of the Lancelot-Grail cycle, *vil* in such contexts typically describes a moral rather than a physical baseness.[140] Hence in (12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille, the wife tells her husband, a knight, that he is a "vavassor vils" who wants to accept a coat from another, like a minstrel. She would prefer that he be shaved completely, head and neck (something done to fools, and hence another indicator of diminished status)[141] than that he accept a coat made for another:

Bien doit estre chevaliers vis
Qui veut estre menestereus:
Mieus vodroie que eüsiez res
Sanz eve la teste et le col,
Que ja n'i remeinsist chevol!
Ch'apartient a ces jugleours,
Et a ces bons vieleours,
Que il aient des chevaliers
Les robes, que c'est lor mestiers.

139Cf. (30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue II (Le Heron) in which the nurse entrusted with a young girl's care reproaches her for having lost her virginity. The word *vilment* is used in conjunction with the verbs *blamer* and *ledengir*:

Dunc la comencat à tencir
A blamer e à ledengir
E trop vilment la demena. (ll. 73-75 I)
Then she began to reproach, blame and insult her, and very vilely she treated her...

140Robreau 185. While Robreau found in the Lancelot-Grail cycle that *vil* generally described moral baseness while *vilain* was used to convey the idea of physical ugliness, this distinction does not hold for the fabliaux. *Vilain* in the fabliaux is used to indicate both physical ugliness and moral baseness.

141See below, Part 2: Situations Indicating the Experience of Shame, F. Being Shaved or Shorn.

Ce n'apartient pas a vostre oés
D'avoir garnement s'il n'est nués. (ll. 207-217)

May he be a vile knight who wants to be a minstrel: I would prefer that you were shaved without water, your head and neck, so that no hair remained there! It is fitting for *jongleurs* and good music makers to have garments from knights, for that is their livelihood. It is not customary for you to have a garment if it is not new.

In (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, the *conteur* observes that *vil* knights are the offspring of marriages between nobles and the usurers to whom nobles owe money:

Li chevalier mauvias et vil
Et coart issent de tel gent,
Qui miauz aiment or et argent
Que il ne font chevalerie.
Ensi est largesce perie,
Ensi dechiet enor et pris! (ll. 30-35)

Bad, vile and cowardly knights are the issue of such people, who prefer gold and silver to chivalry. Hence generosity perished, hence honor and reputation declined![142]

Robreau in her study of the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle notes that *vilté* conveys the idea of scorn, which again appertains to the experience of shame. To be judged to have low status by others is the equivalent of being scorned.[143] Hence in (1) Estormi the *conteur* ends the tale by saying that one should not scorn (*avoir en vilté*) one's lowly relatives:

Mes on ne doit pas, ce me samble,
Avoir por nule povreté
Son petit parent en viuté,
S'il n'est ou trahitres ou lerres,
Que s'il est fols ou tremeleres,
Il s'en retret au chief de foiz. (ll. 620-625)

But one should not, it seems to me, hold in scorn one's lesser relative on account of any poverty; whether he is a traitor or thief, or a fool or a gambler, he comes through in the end.

The adverb *vilment* conveys the idea of scorn in (5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse, in which the husband whose wife has reacted violently to a comment he made regarding her purchase at the market says to her:

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[142]Robreau, pp. 181-193, notes that *vilain* and *vil* are virtual synonyms, as are *vilenie* and *vilté*. *Vilain* is used more often to denote physical ugliness, while *vil* tends to be used to describe moral baseness.

[143]Robreau 194-195. See also Godefroy; Greimas.

..."Com tu me tiens cort!
A paines os je dire mot!
Grant honte ai quant mon voisin m'ot
Que tu me maines si viument." (ll. 76-79)

..."How you impose so many rules on me! I scarcely dare say a word! I am very ashamed when my neighbors hear you treat me with such scorn."

In (83) La Dame escoillee, to scorn one's husband (*tenir vil*) is to do *vilté*: "Feme ne fait vilté grignor/ Que de vill tenir son seignor!" (ll. 460-461: "A woman does no greater shame than to scorn her lord").

Expressions from the *vil* family can also indicate the act of shaming another person. In the quote above from (83) La Dame escoillee, the phrase *faire vilté* is synonymous to *faire honte*: it indicates the act of doing something shameful to another and thereby failing to treat that person (in this case the husband) in a manner befitting his rank.

Other expressions from the *vil* family indicate the state of shame and are therefore equivalent to the sense of *honte* or *hontage*. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier the term *viltance*[144] occurs in conjunction with the word *honte* to refer to the state of shame: "Bien a porcachié son anui/ Et sa grant honte et sa viutanche" (ll. 907-908: "He has well pursued his own pain and his great shame, and his vileness"). The state of shame is indicated also in (43) La Male Honte II. At the end of the fabliau the *conteur* states that when the contents of the purse were divided up among the people of England, *viltés* increased:

Car chascun iour lor croist viltés
Par maluais seiour et par lasque
Nous a li honte pris en tasque... (ll. 194-196 F)

For each day their shame grew. Through delay and sloth shame has subjugated us.

While terms of the *vil* family occur with much less frequency than terms of the *honte/honir* family or terms of the *vilain* family, they can nonetheless be clear indicators of the experience of shame. In their basic sense as lowering or debasing, they describe insults, scorn, or falls in status. Occasionally they are equivalent to such expressions from the *honte/honir* family as *faire honte* (to fail to treat a person in a manner befitting his or her status) and *honte* or *hontage* (the state of shame).

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[144]Greimas defines *viltance* as "action ou chose vile; mépris; affront, vilenie, déshonneur."

E. Lait, Laidir, Laidement

Terms of the *lait* family derive from the Frankish term **laid*, meaning disagreeable or unpleasant.[145] The Old French verb *laidir* indicated to abuse or mistreat someone, either physically or verbally. To abuse someone verbally meant to insult them or harm them with words. Sometimes the modifiers *de la parole* or *du cors* accompany the noun *lait* or the verb *laidir* to delineate whether it is physical or verbal assault that is intended. The noun *lait* bore the sense of an insult, outrage, offense, wrong, harm, damage, injury, or something which brought injustice or dishonor. It could also have the sense of the modern French *laideur*, meaning ugliness.[146] All of these senses are evident in the fabliaux. What is interesting is how so many of these senses were linked to the experience of shame and indeed were synonymous with terms of the *honte/honir* family. The words with which *lait, laidir* and *laidement* are most commonly linked or paired in the fabliaux are terms from the *honte/honir* family, most often in the expression "honte et lait"[147] and "honte et lait et anuis."[148] In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, the squire uses the expression "lait du cors" and "grant honte" to describe the punishment (presumably buggery) which the knight will visit on the squire if the squire fails to carry out the knight's command:

> "Sire," fait-il, "Je n'irai mie
> A grant anui, a felonnie
> Me feroit tort et lais du cors
> Mesires, qui est grans et fors,
> Et grant honte me vorroit faire." (ll. 1266-1270)
>
> "Sir," he said, "I will not go! My lord, who is big and strong, would do me wrong, with great affliction and feloniously, and would injure me in body, and much shame would he make me undergo."

As with the expression *faire honte*, *faire lait* usually conveys the sense of physically injuring or punishing someone (or threatening to do so) for some wrong done. The wrongdoer is thereby shamed or threatened with shame. Hence the jealous husband Aloul in the fabliau of the

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145Greimas.

146Tobler-Lommatzsch and Godefroy.

147(104) La Feme qui cunquie son Baron l. 10; (124) Trubert l. 1016; see also (14) Aloul l. 144 ("honte et ledure").

148(102) Le Prestre comporté l. 961; see also (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 1267-1268.

same name [(14)] tells his wife that if she goes into the orchard again without his permission, he will *faire* her *honte* and *laidure*: "Honte et ledure li feroit" (l. 144: "He would do her shame and injury"). The duke in (124) Trubert, tied to a tree by Trubert and facing a beating, protests that he has done nothing to deserve the *vilenie* and *let* which Trubert is about to *faire* to him:

> "Avoi, mestre, tel vilenie
> Ne feroiz vos ja, se Deus plest,
> Que vos me faciez point de let;
> Ainsi m'avreiez vos traï:
> Ne vos ai mei deservi. (ll. 793-797)
>
> Ah, sir, I would never do you such villainy, may it please God that you not do me any outrage; thus you would have betrayed me: I have not deserved it at all.

The king in (13) Le Vilain Mire tells the peasant doctor whom he has repeatedly ordered beaten that he would feel shame if he ordered him beaten any more. To do something shameful to another who does not merit it brings shame upon oneself. Hence the beating itself can be regarded as shameful:

> "Et ne vos ferez plus ferir,
> Car grant honte ai de vos laidir." (ll. 372-373)
>
> And I will not have you beaten any more, because I would feel great shame to do you this outrage.[149]

Like *faire honte*, *faire lait* can also have the sense of failing to treat a person in a manner befitting their rank. Hence the jealous husband in (104) La Feme qui cunquie son Baron who keeps his faithful wife locked up, treating her like someone who has already done wrong, is said to do her "honte et lait:"

> Et li vilains et honte et lait
> Li refaisoit et rebatoit,

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[149]See also (1) Estormi, in which the *conteur* foreshadows the death of the three lecherous priests at the hands of a protective husband with the words, "...il ont porchacié laidement/ Lor mort et lor definement!" (ll. 133-134: "...they have outrageously pursued their death and their end!"). In one manuscript of (43) La Male Honte, the noble man at the king's court protests the repeated beatings given to the peasant who seems intent on shaming the king with the words: "...trop laidement/ Faites demener cest preudom" (ll. 138-139: "...you have had this gentleman treated too outrageously"). Another example, in which the term *laidis* appears, occurs in (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre III in which the hornblower beaten by the two marshals is described as "mout laidis" (l. 222 D). In (102) Le Prestre comporté, the prior fears the "honte et anuis et lais" (l. 961) or punishment which he will suffer if he is accused of the murder of the priest. The adverb *laidement* refers to defeat rather than humiliating punishment in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, in which the knight, returning from a tournament, is described as having been *laidement* beaten: "Laidement fu desbaretés" (l. 12).

Com cil qui jalous en estoit. (ll. 10-12)
And the peasant did her shame and outrage and cut her off like someone who was jealous.

The expression *avoir lait* is synonymous with *avoir honte*, indicating the shame one feels or endures. In (124) Trubert, the duke's seneschal, who is outraged, along with the duke's other men, at the shameful beating the duke has received, says all will "avoir honte et lait" if the duke does not reveal the identity of his attackers and permit them to avenge the misdeed:

"Sire, ce sera mout grant maus
Se nos ne savons qui ce a fet;
Grant honte i avrons et grant let,
Se vos n'estes vengies tantost.
Il vos ont mis a grant escot:
Batus vos ont vilainement... (ll. 1014-1019)
Lord, this will be a very great wrong if we do not know who did this; we will have great shame and outrage from this if you are not avenged at once. They have treated you very harshly: they have beaten you villainously...

The expression *laidir de parole*, like *dire honte*, describes the act of verbally diminishing the status of another by stating to his or her face the wrong he or she has done. In (69) Les Tresces II, for instance, the husband both physically beats and verbally abuses the woman posing as his wife because she has brought a lover into their house:

Ainsi la damoisele bat
Le chevalier, et se debat
Et de parole la laidist... (ll. 205-207)
And so the knight beat the woman and exerted himself and injured her with words.[150]

Laidir can be synonymous with *honir* in its sense as "to cuckold." As will be discussed later, the shame in being a cuckold derived from allowing one's wife to have the upper hand. In (48) L'Enfant qui fut remis au Soleil, the husband whose wife realizes she has wronged her husband (and hence does not attempt to dominate him again) is said not to be *laidis*:

Bel s'en est ses sires vengiez
Qui laidement fu engingniez
Et par paroles et par dis
Mes ia'mes n'en sera laidis
Por ce qu'ele se sent mesfete... (ll. 141-145 A)

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[150]Cf. the expression *laides paroles*, used in (102) Le Prestre comporté (l. 220) to refer to the harmful rumors of murder which the maidservant fears will circulate if she and her mistress do not take quick action to rid themselves of the body of the priest, who has mysteriously died in the bath.

Her lord, who was outrageously tricked, by her words and pronouncements, was beautifully avenged. But he will never be shamed anymore, because she realized she had done wrong...

In this quotation, the adverb *laidement* accompanies the verb *engignier*. *Laidement* again accompanies the description of an act of trickery in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, in which the maiden at the castle exclaims, when her pudenda reveal to the visiting knight that she is not a virgin: "Trop su honye ledement/ E engyné vylement" (ll. 189-190 M: "I am outrageously shamed and vilely tricked"). In (108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit pour Morele sa Provende avoir, the exhausted husband whose wife repeatedly asks for "oats" for her "horse" whenever she wants sex finally defecates in his wife's lap, telling her that when he is out of "oats" she shall have "bran" instead. The *conteur*'s comment links *laidure* with deceit: "Forment se sentit deceüe/ Por la laidure qu'ot eüe" (ll. 323-324: "She felt very deceived on account of the offense she suffered"). Trickery entailed shaming the victim and doing him or her harm, both basic senses of terms in the *lait* family.

Less strongly linked to shame, terms in the *lait* family could also indicate anything filthy, either morally or physically.[151] Sodomy is referred to as *lait* (l. 434) in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier.[152] The ignorant peasant Robbins in (10) Jouglet is told that it is *ledure* to defecate on one's wedding day (l. 89). As just noted above, *laidure* in (108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit pour Morele sa Provende avoir describes the husband's act of defecating in his wife's lap (l. 324). The monk in (125) Le Moigne who goes off the path into the mud with his horse is said to be "laidement molliés" (l. 35). In (115) Les Braies le Priestre, the *conteur* uses the adjective *lait* to describe amusing tales about priests who cuckold husbands:

Recorder ai oÿ maint conte
Que priestres sont fait as pluisors honte,
Et ont a leur femme jeü
Et avoec çou le leur eü:
On en conte maint lait reviel... (ll. 1-5)

I have heard said many tales regarding priests who have done shame to many and lain with their wives and taken part in what is theirs: one tells many dirty ditties about it...

Just as *honir* in its sense of "to soil" could convey a sense of diminished status, many of these

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151 Cf. Greimas, who defines the adjective *lait, laid* as "désagréable; horrible, odieux; nuisible, funeste; dévasté."

152 It is unclear whether *laidure* in l. 426 refers just to sodomy, or whether it also refers to the cuckolding of the priest and the deflowering of his niece.

uses of *lait* and its derivatives in the context of filth or soiling are also linked to shame. The monk in (125) Le Moigne, for instance, would rather be castrated than have "tel honte" (l. 37) happen to him as falling in the mud with his horse, which prompts the butchers in the market nearby to mock him. The knight's proposal to sodomize the priest in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier causes the priest to *s'en vergoignier* (l. 1094) and lament that he has pursued his own "grant honte" (l. 1122).

The adjective *lait* was most commonly contrasted with *bel*, as in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, in which the knight deflowers the priest's niece, "Cui que soit biel ne cui soit lait" (l. 663: "No matter whom it pleased nor to whom it was disagreeable"). A similar usage appears in (60) Le Chapelain, in which the provost tells Bernart that he is being accused "D'une chose qui n'est pas bele,/ Ainz est mout lede, ce sachiez!" (ll. 209-210: "Of something which is not pleasant, but rather is very unpleasant, know this!"). This usage harkens back to the original sense of the Frankish term **laid*, meaning disagreeable or unpleasant, and is the core meaning of the term in Old French. Even in this usage, however, a sense of shame could be inherent. A maiden who is deflowered against her will is typically said to be shamed, and accusations of theft and murder as in (60) Le Chapelain could also be regarded as shameful.

The word *lait* and its derivatives are thus closely linked to the experience of shame. When indicating injuries administered as shameful punishments, the act of failing to treat someone in a manner befitting his or her rank, the act of suffering shame, the act of verbally diminishing another person's status, cuckolding, or trickery, terms in the *lait* family describe the decline in status that is the essence of shame. In the sense of "disagreeable" or "unpleasant" or in the sense of "filthy," terms in the *lait* family could also pertain to the experience of shame.

F. Laidengier

The verb *laidengier*, originally deriving from the adjective *lait*, indicated either to injure or to insult.[153] As with *lait* and its other derivatives, a sense of outrage and assault upon one's status is common to both meanings. In its sense as "to insult," *laidengier* is synonymous with *dire honte*, indicating the act of verbally berating someone to their face for a wrong which they have done. In this usage it is accompanied by expressions from the *honte/honir* family (*dire*

153Tobler-Lommatzch and Godefroy.

honte, *faire honte* and *honir*)[154], and, most often, *maudire*.[155] A typical usage occurs in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, in which the priest is berated at length by his mistress for forcing her to sleep with their overnight guest. The priest responds to her words with shame:

> Dont a tel caut que trestout sue
> Li prestres de fine honte.
> Dame Avinee tout li conte
> Sa mauvaisté et sa pesanche. (ll. 993-996)
>
> Then the false priest was so hot that he was completely soaked from sweat because of the shame. Lady Avinée recounted to him all his wickedness and his grief.

He at first attempts to ignore her, but then accuses her of trying to exact vengeance by exerting herself to "maudire et lesdengier" him:

> -"Hé, vous estes bien esmeüé
> En maudire et en lesdengier,
> Si vous cuidiés en moi vengier...(ll. 1021-1023)
>
> You exert yourself well in cursing and berating (me) for this, thus you think to take vengeance on me.

In virtually every instance in which *laidengier* is used, the object of the attack, like the priest in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, is described as feeling ashamed.[156] To *laidengier* a person was clearly to diminish their status.

Interestingly, to *laidengier* a person was also considered crude or lower-class behavior. All of the characters who are said verbally to *laidengier* another are non-noble, comprised of peasants [(39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait, (43) La Male Honte], the mistresses of priests [(18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier], a maidservant [(18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville], the wife of a dyer [(81) Le Prestre teint], a blacksmith's valet [(77)Connebert], and a hideous old nurse [(30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue]. In (120) Le

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154(18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville ll. 420-426 H; (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait ll. 92, 103-104 A

155(43) La Male Honte II l. 96; (81) Le Prestre teint l. 51.

156(30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue ll. 68-76, 105-108 i; (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait ll. 44-45, 64-65, 82-83, 91-92, 103-104 A; (77) Connebert ll. 280-289; (81) Le Prestre teint ll. 51-56. The only exception are (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, in which the maidservant and the priest's mistress engage in a verbal dual, each berating the other in an escalating barrage of denunciations; and (43) La Male Honte II, in which the king responds with great anger to what appear to be the peasant's repeated attempts to shame him. See Chapter Three for a discussion of the various manifestations of the feeling of shame.

Sentier battu the *conteur* notes that the knight acts very courteously in exacting vengeance on a lady because he does not want to *laidengier* her when she uses a clever word play to impugn his sexual prowess. To *laidengier* would be to act in a non-courtly manner. Instead, he uses a clever word play in revenge.

> Ne se sot plus courtoisement
> Le chevalier de li vengier:
> Ne la volt mie ledengier,
> Mes grossement la rencontra
> Et sa pensee li moustra,
> Si com a lui ot fet la sienne. (ll. 92-97)
>
> The knight did not know himself how to exact vengeance on her more courteously: he did not at all want to berate her, but grandly he engaged her and showed her his thought, just as she had shown hers to him.

In the sense of "to injure," the verb *laidengier* is most often accompanied by *battre*.[157] Like *laidir* and *faire honte*, *laidengier* usually describes the act of physically beating someone as punishment for some wrong done: attempting to deflower a virgin (especially heinous when committed by a priest),[158] shaming the king,[159] cuckolding,[160] welching on an agreement,[161] failing to care for that which has been entrusted to one's charge,[162] and taking actions which result in loss for others.[163] Again as with *laidir* and *faire honte*, an element of shame is often at least implicit. In one instance *laidengier* is paired with the expression *avoir honte* to describe the result of being *laidengié*.[164] In several fabliaux the context itself suggests that the act of being *laidengié* was shameful. The priest in (91) Le Prestre et Alison, for example, who is said to be greatly "batuz et

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157(3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur ll. 391-392; (91) Le Prestre et Alison ll. 420, 435; (63) Celui qui bota la Pierre l. 106.

158(91) Le Prestre et Alison ll. 420, 435.

159(43) La Male Honte II l. 108; l. 150 A.

160(63) Celui qui bota la Pierre II l. 106.

161(45) Le Prestre et les deus Ribaus l. 187.

162(3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur l. 149.

163(3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur l. 392.

164(43) La Male Honte II ll. 106-108.

laidengiez" (l. 420: "greatly beaten and injured/shamed")[165] is beaten by a mob and flees home naked, subject to the blows of the villagers the entire way, after he is discovered lying with a prostitute. His punishment has obviously served to diminish his status in the eyes of the villagers. The association between *laidengier* as physical injury and the experience of shame is evident also in (53) Le sot Chevalier, the one fabliaux in which the word *laidengier* describes not a beating administered as a form of punishment, but a beating that is threatened for no apparent reason. In this fabliau an extremely obtuse knight, not knowing how to engage in intercourse with his new wife, finally asks his mother-in-law for help. She tells him, in colloquial terms, to screw the long one and beat the short one. The knight repeats this injunction to himself throughout the evening, in the hearing of the valet of some knights who ask for shelter for the night from a storm. The valet relates to his superiors what the knight purports to do, using the word *laidengier* to describe the humiliation of being sodomized and beaten:

> "Il dist qu'il nos herbergera
> Et apriés nos laidengera,
> Car il foutera le plus lonc
> Et si batra le cort selonc." (ll. 139-142)
> "He said that he will lodge us, and after he will assault us, for he will screw the tallest and beat the shortest."

The shortest knight in the company again uses the word *laidengier* to describe the beating. His insistence on taking vengeance underscores the shameful nature of what is described by *laidengier*:

> Ja n'aroie de vos secors
> Que je n'i fusce laidengiés
> Ançois que je fusce vengiés. (ll. 156-158)
> I would have help from you, (such) that I would not be assaulted before I were avenged.

G. Terms Indicating "To Soil" (Soillier, Conchier)

Anthropologists and psychologists have observed that a sense of being dirty or stained is often part of the experience of shame.[166] The verbs *conchier* and *soillier* appear infrequently in

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165See also l. 435.

166Leon Wurmser, The Mask of Shame (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981) 81; Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society, ed. J.G. Peristiany, The Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) 35. Mahadev Apte, Humour and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.127, notes that world-wide studies of ethnic

the fabliaux, but are usually synonymous with *honir*. The verb *soillier* literally meant to soil, stain, dirty or defile.[167] In (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens it appears twice, once to indicate becoming dirty physically[168] and once to indicate becoming dirty in a moral sense. In the latter instance, a sense of shame is apparent. The *conteur* uses the word to describe how husbands with good wives soil themselves (*se soillier*) by associating with women of ill repute. The contrast drawn between the good wife ("bone moillier") and the "foles garces tricheresses" serves to underline the decline in status the faithless husband undergoes in a liaison with the latter:

> Por ce est fous, sachiez de voir,
> Li hons qui a bone moillier,
> Quant il se va aillours soullier
> As foles garces tricheresses,
> Qui plus que chaz sunt lecherresses,
> Ou il n'a verité ne foi,
> Amour, ne leauté, ne loi... (ll.422-428)

> For this reason the man who has a good wife is a fool, know this well, when he sullies himself elsewhere with the foolish deceitful strumpets, who are more lecherous than cats, who have no truth nor faith, nor love, nor loyalty, nor law...

The verb *conchier* had three distinct senses, all interrelated and potentially indicative of the experience of shame: to stain or soil; to trick; and to mock, outrage or dishonor.[169] In the fabliaux, a sense of diminished status always accompanies the use of the term. In (103) Le

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humor have found that dirtiness is among the traits typically ascribed to any group that is ridiculed or mocked.

167Tobler-Lommatzch and Godefroy.

168The husband at the end of the tale relates how his mistress turned him away when he came to her with his clothes in tatters and a story of having fallen into ruin. The word *soillier* describes his appearance:

> "...quant el me vit
> Mal vestu et je li oi dit
> Qu'a Troies estoie essilliez,
> Et ele vit que fui soilliez,
> Hors de sa meson me chaça." (ll. 381-385)

> "...When she saw me poorly dressed and I had told her that I had been ruined in Troyes, and she saw that I was filthy, she chased me from her house."

A sense of poverty, and hence an implication that a decline in status has occured, may also be evident in this usage.

169Tobler-Lommatzch and Godefroy.

Prestre et le Chevalier *conchier* appears with *honir* to describe the shame suffered by the priest's mistress in being forced to sleep with their overnight guest for the priest's own financial profit. She tells the priest, "Vo male couvoitie/ Vous a honnit et moi cunchie!" (ll. 863-864: "Your wicked covetousness has shamed you and stained me!"). In (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel II, *conchier* means "to trick," but a sense of shame is also explicit. In this fabliaux, a wife tricks the villagers into believing her husband has gone mad when he accuses her of having been away for a week in an adulterous liaison. The villagers tie him up and the shocked man is described with the words, "Bien est matez et cunchiiez" (l. 180: "He is well defeated and tricked"). The participation of the villagers in this humiliating experience and the use of the verb *mater*, often linked with the verb *honir*, all point to the experience of shame.

Even when it denotes simply "to trick," a sense of shame is always present in the use of *conchier*. In (10) Jouglet, the *jongleur* Jouglet who sought to trick the peasant Robbins on his wedding day is tricked in return, with the result that Jouglet is beaten by a great crowd. The *conteur*'s comments underline the decline in status suffered by the trickster who is himself *conchié*:

> Eissi fu conchié Juglet!
> Segnors, ce dit Colin Malet,
> Tel cuide conchier autrui
> Qui assez miez conchie lui. (ll. 417-420)
>
> Thus was Jouglet tricked! Lords, this says Colin Malet: such a person thinks to trick another who much better tricks him.

In (91) Le Prestre et Alison, the *conteur* uses the word *conchier* to describe the deceit practiced on the priest who pays a large sum to the mother of the girl he loves for the privilege of sleeping with the girl, only to find he has slept with a common prostitute instead and, as described above, is then beaten naked through the streets by the villagers who discover him lying naked with the whore: "Onques mais ne fu guilez hon/ Que li prestres fu conchiez..." (ll. 132-133: "Never was a man tricked as the priest was tricked"). In the fabliaux, to be tricked is in itself shameful for the person who is deceived.[170] The humiliation suffered by the priest further underscores the link

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[170]See Mary Jane Schenck, "The Fabliau Ethos: Recent Views on Its Origins," Reinardus 1 (1988): 121-129; and The Fabliaux: Tales of Wit and Deception, Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages 24 (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1987), 54. According to Schenck, the fabliaux celebrate the virtues of wit and deception and make fun of stupid people. For a more detailed discussion, see below, Chapter Four, A. The Types of Sanctions.

between trickery and shame.[171]

As will be discussed later regarding the vocabulary of guilt, the concept of sin as a form of staining or filth was a commonplace in medieval religious and didactic literature. Not surprisingly, the concept appears infrequently in the fabliaux. What is of interest, however, is that the concept of sin as filth or stain is expressed using different terms (the verb *entechier* and the adjective *orde*) than those used to indicate shame.

Interestingly, in numerous fabliaux characters find themselves made muddy or dirty in situations that are described as shameful. The shamed provost in (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche, who is said to have great *honte* done to his flesh (l. 127: "Mout li fist grante honte la chars") is thrown into a ditch with a dead dog. The castrated priest in (27) Le Prestre crucefié who has the hue and cry raised after him is beaten into a mud patch (l. 86). The forester's wife in (2) Constant du Hamel is thrown naked into a quagmire after her humiliating rape (l. 772). In (125) Le Moigne a monk, preoccupied with the sight of some beautiful girls, falls into the mud with his horse. The butchers nearby all bang their hammers in unison at the sight and the monk, covered in mud, feels greatly shamed as a result:

> A paines s'est levés Baillés,
> Et li moignes est remontés,
> Qui n'estoit pas bien essués,
> Ains estoit laidement molliés:
> Il amast mieus estre escoillés
> C'avenue li fust tel honte! (ll. 32-37)
>
> With difficulty the horse got up and the monk remounted. He was not well wiped off, but rather was grossly soiled: he would rather have been castrated than that such shame should happen to him!

Becoming muddied or dirtied clearly contributed to the experience of shame.

Several curses used in the fabliaux entailed wishing that a person be thrown into or

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171 Another instance of the use of *conchier* to indicate "to trick" occurs in (45) Le Prestre et les deus Ribaus, in which one of the scoundrels uses the word *conchier* to describe how the other tricked a third person:

> "Si set il mout plus de malisce
> Que ribaus que je veïsse onques:
> Comment le cunchias tu donques?
> Fet Reniers, "Il est si repoins!" (ll. 38-41)
>
> "He knows more of malice than any scoundrel I have ever seen: how did you trick him then?" said Reniers, "He is so crafty!"

A sense of shame is not explicitly conveyed by *conchier* in this instance, but the narrative is very brief.

drowned in a latrine. As an insult, the curse was intended to shame. In (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, for instance, the seneschal tells the peasant whom he insults and humiliates that he hopes the man who showed him the way to the feast may be drowned in a latrine: "Noiés soit en une longaingne/ Qui la voie vous ensaingna!" (ll. 118-119: "May he be drowned in a cesspool who showed you the way!"). Likewise in (59) Le Foteor the maidservant curses the fornicator-for-hire when she has inquired of his profession, taking his bald statement for an attempt to shame her:

> "Et bone joie vos doint Dieus,
> Biaus sire, vos et vostre gieus
> Fust or en une grant longaigne!
> Mout me vient or a grant engaigne
> Que vos m'avez ensi gabee."
> Par mautalant s'en est alee. (ll. 130-135)
>
> "And may God give you joy, good sir, would that you and your trick were now drowned in a great latrine! It comes to me now as a great trick that you have thus mocked me." Angrily she left him.[172]

In skimmingtons and shaming processions in medieval France and England, the offenders were sometimes seated backwards on a horse or a mule, holding the animal's tail. In some rare instances they were seated with their nose thrust into the animal's anal cleft.[173] Blasphemers were punished by being pelted with feces.[174] In the fabliaux there is likewise a close link between the scatological and the shameful. As was mentioned above, *ledure* is used to describe defecation in (10) Jouglet (l. 89). Similarly in (112) Charlot le Juif qui chia en la Pel dou Lievre, when one character defecates in a rabbit skin, he is said to do *la vilonie* in the skin: "Fist en la pel la vilonie" (l. 114). In several fabliaux characters are besmeared with feces. The words with which this is described or the reaction of the characters who are soiled suggests that they are shamed as a result. The wife in (10) Jouglet uses the word *honis* to describe what has happened to Jouglet (l. 370), and the wife in (108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit pour Morel is described as

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172See also (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne ll. 161-163; (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville l. 343; (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine l. 52-53; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 813-814.

173Ruth Mellinkoff, "Riding Backwards: Theme of Humiliation and Symbol of Evil," Viator 4 (1973): 153-176. Being observed in the act of defecation, like sexual intercourse, appears to be virtually a universal cause for shame. See Epstein 40-41, 49-50.

174Mireille Vincent-Cassy, "Prison et châtiments a la fin du moyen âge," Les Marginaux et les exclus dans l'histoire, ed. B. Vincent, Cahier Jussieu 5 (1979) 265-266.

"forment...esbahie" (l. 318) after her husband defecates in her lap, a term which, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, is a frequent reaction to the experience of shame. The baker in (112) Charlot le Juif qui chia en la Pel dou Lievre who tricks the minstrel is deceived by him in turn when the minstrel tells him he has left something in the rabbit skin he gave him. The baker thrusts his hands inside, only to find it full of feces. He is described as *conchïez*:

> Ensi fu deus fois conchiez:
> Dou menestreil fu espiez
> Et dou lievre fu mal bailliz,
> Que ses chevaus l'en fu failliz. (ll. 127-130)
>
> Thus he was tricked twice: he was betrayed by the minstrel and treated badly by the rabbit, on account of which his horse had died.

Here both senses of *conchier* appear to be operative: the baker is tricked by the rabbit -- in giving chase to the rabbit, his horse died -- but he is both soiled and tricked by Jouglet.

Flatulence as well is presented as shameful in the fabliaux. In (124) Trubert, the scoundrel Trubert lets fly a mighty blast from his bowels at a courtly feast. The nobles at the feast are said to feel *honte* when they hear the noise:

> Trubert lesse un grant pet aler,
> Tel que tuit et toutes l'oïrent.
> Li chevalier mout s'en aïrent,
> Mes ne sevent qui ce a fet:
> N'i a celui honte n'en ait;
> Nes li dus an fu corociez. (ll. 524-529)
>
> Trubert let a great fart go, so that everyone heard it. The knights became very angry, but they didn't know who did it: there was no one who did not have shame; even the duke was angry.

Trubert quickly puts the blame for the offense on his dinner companion, Aude, saying to her, "Damoisele,.../A toz nos avez fet grant honte!" (ll. 532-533: "Lady,...you have done great shame to all of us!") She vehemently denies that she did such a *vilonie*: "...par celui qui m'engendra/ Je ne fis hui ci vilenie!" (ll. 542-543: "...by he who engendered me, I did not commit any villainy here today!").

The shame associated with the scatalogical in the fabliaux is evident also in the humiliation which characters are said to experience when they are forced to kiss someone's buttocks. The most obvious example, of course, is (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, in which the peasant-turned-knight proves himself a coward by choosing to kiss the buttocks of a strange knight rather than fight him. When his wife reveals she knows of the shameful kiss, he is greatly ashamed: "Mout en ot grant honte et grant ire..." (l. 295 D: "He was very ashamed and angry"). In (114) La Gageure a chambermaid suggests to her suitor, a squire, that he kiss her buttocks as

proof that he truly lovers her. She assures him that no one will witness the kiss, evidence that it was in fact humiliating:

> ...si il velt s'amour aver,
> Si li covent son cul beyser,
> Et ce si privement
> Qu'il ne soit aparsu de la gent:
> "Quar de ce n'averez ja blame." (ll. 43-47)
>
> ...If he wants to have her love, he must kiss her ass, and [do] this privately, so that he will not be seen by anyone: "For you will never have blame for this."

The lover in (51) Les deus Changeors suffers a similar form of humiliation when, to conceal himself from the husband he has cuckolded, he hides beneath the skirts of the wife. The *conteur* describes at some length how the wife, taunting him for his cowardice, pushes him behind her so that his face directly confronts her buttocks:

> Mes la dame...
> Ainz l'a derrier son cul torné:
> Le musart a si atorné
> Qu'il ne la puet veoir el vis.
> Onques nus hom a mon avis
> Ne fu mes ausi desjouglez... (ll. 236-241)
>
> But the lady instead pushed him back behind her ass: she so positioned the fool that he can not look her in the face. Never was any man, in my opinion, so humiliated...

Filth and feces are frequently linked in the fabliaux to the peasant class. The seneschal in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, for example, denounces the peasant in large part because he is so filthy:

> Li seneschaus celle part rue
> Ses ieus, si choisi le vilain,
> Qui mont estoit de lait pelain:
> Deslavés iert, s'ot chief locu... (ll. 94-97)
>
> The seneschal cast his eyes in that direction, and saw the peasant, who was in a very ugly state: he was unwashed, and had matted hair...

In (122) Les trois Dames de Paris the three women who have been buried alive are said to stink like beggars when they re-emerge from the cemetery:

> Elles n'oloient pas encens:
> Mont erent ordes et puans,
> Si com gens povres ou truans
> Qui se couchent par ces ruelles. (ll. 234-237)
>
> They did not smell like incense: they were filthy and stinking, like poor people and beggars who sleep in these lanes.

Soiled clothes and poverty are similarly linked in (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, in which the husband is turned away by his mistress after he comes to her with his clothes torn and dirtied, bearing news that he has lost everything at the market. In later recounting to others the story of how she rejected him, the husband draws a close connection between his soiled clothes and his purported poverty:

> "...quant el me vit
> Mal vestu et je li oi dit
> Qu'a Troies estoie essilliez,
> Et ele vit que fui soilliez,
> Hors de sa meson me chaça." (ll. 381-385)
>
> "...When she saw me poorly dressed and I had told her that I had been ruined in Troyes, and she saw that I was filthy, she chased me from her house."

Along the same lines, many of the more unpleasant characters of low social status in the fabliaux are said to have black skin. This is common in other works of medieval literature as well.[175] The miserable mother in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force, for example, is characterized as

> Mout felonnesse et mout avere;
> Bochue estoit, noire et hideuse...
> ...Trop ert parlant et de put estre. (ll. 4-5, 11)
>
> ...Very felonious and very miserly. She was hunchbacked, black and hideous...She was very gossipy and of stinking character.

One of the "ribaus" in (45) Le Prestre et les deus Ribaus has "...unes longues jambes,/ Plus noire que forniaus de chambe" (ll. 207-208: "...a long leg blacker than a brewery fireplace"). The priest insults the forester in (2) Constant du Hamel when he tells him that his wife has black buttocks: "Ele a le cul plus noir que corbe" (l. 763: "She has an ass blacker than a crow"). Feces is likewise associated with the lower classes in (92) Le Vilain Asnier, in which a mule-cart driver hauling a load of dung mistakenly wanders into the spice merchant's street in Montpellier and faints dead away, overcome by the strange smells. He is revived only when someone holds some dung under his nose.

We saw above that terms from the *vilain* family in the fabliaux are often used in a scatalogical context. It is not surprising, then, that the only characters in the fabliaux who are

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175Cf. James Westfall Thompson and Edgar Nathaniel Johnson, An Introduction to Medieval Europe 300-1500 (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. Inc., 1937) 343. The skin of the "wild man" of medieval literature was also black. See Penelope Doob, Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 134.

flatulent or relieve their bowels during the course of the narrative are of lower class status. The man in (55) Le Pet au Vilain who, on his deathbed, releases some gas which the devil mistakes for a soul is a peasant, as too is the man who suffers from a severe bout of diarrhea in (10) Jouglet. The man who empties his bowels into a rabbit skin in (112) Charlot le Juif qui chia en la Pel dou Lievre is a Jewish minstrel. The woman who presents her husband with a dried piece of her own excrement in (57) La Crote is again a peasant and the flatulent woman in (107) Les deus Vilains is the wife of a man who has put up two peasants for the night.[176] The scoundrel Trubert who noisily passes gas at a noble feast in (124) Trubert is also of low status, his family living in an isolated hut in the woods.

The negative connotation of the scatological may help to explain the fabliaux attitude towards the female genitalia.[177] In several fabliaux the close proximity of the vagina and anus is the specific subject of some comment, humor, and disgust. For example, in the fabliau (32) Les trois Meschines, a woman attempting to urinate in a pot containing some precious beauty powder that needs to be mixed with urine releases some unexpected gas instead, causing the powder to fly away. In mock debate fashion, the *conteur* poses the question to the audience of whether the flatulent woman or the woman who held the pot up to her nether parts should pay for the lost powder, drawing attention to the difficulty of holding a vessel to a woman's behind so that it covers the opening of the vagina but not the anus:

> Si ra grant force en test tenir
> Endroit le con sanz avenir

---

[176]The husband in (108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit who defecates in his wife's lap is described as going out to his labor: "il s'en va en son labour" (l. 220). The flatulent woman in (32) Les trois Meschines is likely of lower class. The fact that none of the woman's companions has servants to go on an errand to Rouen, that one must lend some money to another to make a purchase there, and that the one chosen for the errand must journey on foot all point to low status. The status of the newlywed wife in (84) Gauteron et Marion who releases some gas when her husband first penetrates her is not specified at all. See also the tale Les chevalier, les clers et les vilains, sometimes considered a fabliau, in E. Barbazan and D.M. Méon, Fabliaux et contes des poëtes françois des XI, XII, XIII, XIV et Xve siècles (1808; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1976) 1:45-47.

[177]Sarah Melhado White, "Sexual Language and Human Conflict in the Old French Fabliaux," Comparative Studies in Society and History 24 (1982): 207-208. White observes that the "ultimate weapon" which men in the fabliaux use against women in various verbal attacks on the female genitalia is the fact that the genitalia are located so close to the organs of excrement, the urethra and the anus. White notes how in the fabliaux disgust is shown only for the female genitalia, never the male. Charles Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 118, likewise makes note of the fabliaux's preoccupation with the arrangement of the female anatomy.

Endroit le cul, ce n'est pas fable. (ll. 133-135)
It takes much force to hold a pot right at the vagina without reaching the anus, this is no story.

Similarly, in (46) La Coille noire the wife's failure to wipe her buttocks is said to have resulted in the blackening of her husband's testicles.[178] The close proximity of anus and vagina is also the subject for some comment in the fabliaux in which virgins expel gas when they are first penetrated.[179]

A semantic network showing the links between the concepts associated with soiling and shame is illustrated in Figure 2.2. To be soiled is something that induces shame and likens one to peasants. To be flatulent or to have physical contact with feces is likewise something done only by peasants and which causes great shame, especially for those of noble station. This explains the reaction of the prior in (74) Le Sacristain II when he discovers the prior asleep in the abbey's latrine:

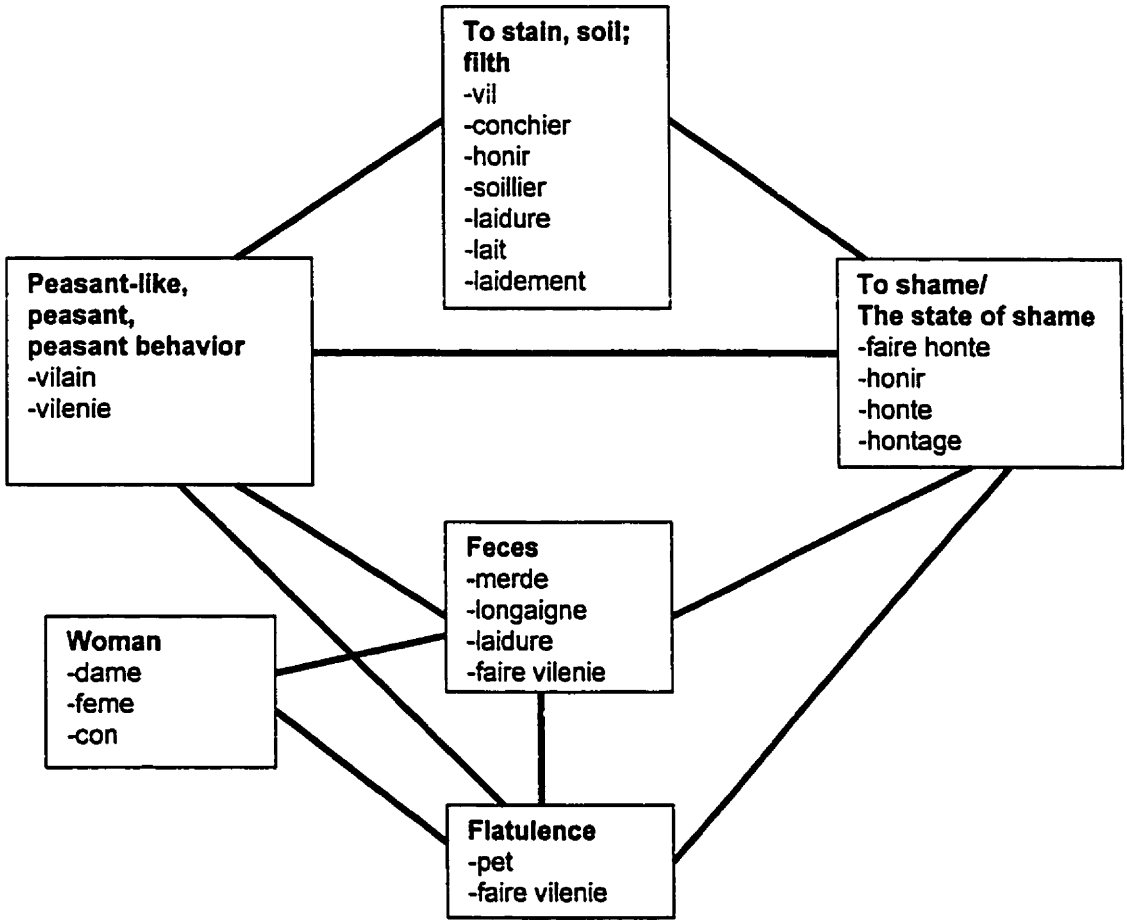
"Hai," fait il, "Com est vileins
Li sougretains qui ci se dort!
S'il le compaire n'est pas tort,
Demain, quant serons en chapitre:
S'il eüst failli a l'espitre,
N'eüst il mie plus meffait! (ll. 426-431)
"Ha!" he said, "How villainous is the sacristan who is sleeping here! If he makes up for it tomorrow, when we are assembled as a chapter, he does not do wrong: if he had stumbled while reading scripture, he could not have done more wrong!"

The semantic network also explains the attitude which the fabliaux assume towards the female genitalia. The arrangement of the female anatomy causes women to be flatulent when they engage in intercourse and leads to contamination with feces. What is not explicit in the fabliaux, but may be understood by tracing the lines through the semantic network, is that women are shameworthy as a result.

178See also (34) Berengier au lonc Cul ll. 242-246 D; (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons; and (53) Le sot Chevalier. Cf. (67) Porcelet, where the wife suggests to her husband that they name her vagina "piggy" because it can't keep clean: "ait non Porcelez,/ Porce qu'il ne puet estre nez" (ll. 21-22). Note also (22) Du Con qui fu fait a la Besche, in which the devil deposits some gas from his bowels on the tongue of Eve. The *conteur* explains that this is why women talk so much.

179See for example (84) Gauteron et Marion and (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre.

Figure 2.2: The Semantic Network Linking Shame and Soiling



H. Vergoigne, Vergoignier, Envergoignier, Vergonder

According to Robreau, the Latin *verecundia* originally designated reserve, discretion, and feminine modesty. By the fourth century it was used to designate anything pertaining to sex which was deemed shameful. The Latin usage determined the meaning of the vernacular *vergoigne* and its derivatives.[180] In the Lancelot-Grail cycle, as well as in the fabliaux, every use of *vergoigne* and its derivatives pertains to sexuality in some fashion, denoting either embarrassment about sexual matters, having a sense of shame or modesty, or the outrage and

[180]Robreau 171-180. The word *vergoigne* could also indicate one's private parts. This usage does not occur in the fabliaux, however.

dishonor that comes from rape, adultery, and cuckolding.[181] Not surprisingly, *vergoigne* is most often paired with *honte*, most frequently in the expression *avoir honte et vergoigne*,[182] a coupling which, as suggested by Robreau, serves as an intensifier.[183]

Robreau in her study of the Lancelot-Grail cycle notes that the noun *vergoigne* is often used to indicate the inner feeling of shame and the verb *vergoignier* to indicate the act of making manifest one's inner feeling of shame.[184] Such does not seem to be the case in the fabliaux. No more than expressions from the *honte/honir* family do the words *vergoigne* and *vergoignier* describe inner feelings.

The expression *avoir vergoigne* in the fabliaux is identical to *avoir honte*, having several different senses: 1) having that inner sense of shame which prevents a person from committing shameful acts; 2) feeling the emotion of shame, or 3) being embarrassed. A lack of an inner sense of shame is indicated by *avoir vergoigne* in (74) Le Sacristain I. The haste of the monk, hurrying to a lady's house for a rendez-vous, is spurred on by his lack of *honte* and *vergoigne*:

> Li moines ne fait plus demore:
> Venus est en mout petit d'ore,
> Car tant haste de sa besoigne
> K'il n'a ne honte ne vergongne. (ll. 155-158)
>
> The monk made no delay: he returned in a short while, for now he hurried so much to satisfy his need that he had neither shame nor modesty.

To feel the emotion of shame is indicated by *avoir vergoigne* in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, in which the knight experiences *vergoigne* upon being told by one of the women bathing in the fountain that he now has the gift of being able to make the anus of any female speak should the pudenda be unable to do so:

> Donc ot li chevaliers vergoigne,

---

181 Godefroy; Greimas.

182 (42) Le Fevre de Creeil l. 123; (74) Le Sacristain I l. 158. See also (14) Aloul, in which occurs the expression "A deshonor le feront vivre,/ A grant vergoingne et a grant honte" (ll. 632-633: They will make him live in dishonor, in much disgrace and with great shame"). See also (118) Le Jugement, in which the abbess says to one of the nuns, "N'ayez hontage,/ Mettez vergongne en nonchaloir" (ll. 8-9: Do not be ashamed, put modesty into the category of things one does not care about").

183 Robreau 178. Robreau views the expression "honte et deshonor" as indicative of a more intense shame than that denoted by "honte et vergoigne."

184 Robreau 173-175, 180.

Qui bien cuide que gabé l'aient
Et que por noient le delaient. (ll. 238-240)

Then the knight, who well thought that they had mocked him and delayed him for nothing, felt shame.

The reference to mockery clearly indicates the experience of shame. In other fabliaux, a feeling of embarrassment rather than shame is indicated by *avoir vergoigne*. In (120) Le Sentier battu, the *conteur* begins by warning of the folly of insulting someone concerning something about which he or she is embarrassed:

Folie est d'autrui ramprosner,
Ne gens de chose araisouner
Dont il ont anuy et vergoigne. (ll. 1-3)

It is folly to insult another, or to discourse with people concerning something about which they are embarrassed or which causes them trouble.

The anxiety over exposure clearly implies embarrassment here rather than shame. A feeling of embarrassment is indicated by *avoir vergoigne* also in (42) Le Fevre de Creeil when the blacksmith's wife asks her husband's assistant if what people say about the size of his erect penis is true. The valet's response indicates embarrassment over the exposure of his sexuality:

"Tesiez, dame," fet li vallés,
Qui grant honte a et grant vergoingne.
"Parlez a moi d'autre besoingne:
De ce ne vous rendrai je conte!" (ll. 122-125)

"Be quiet, my lady," said the valet, who was very ashamed and embarrassed. "Speak to me of something else, concerning this I will not tell you anything!"

Other terms in the *vergoigne/vergonder* family besides *avoir honte* indicate either an inner sense of shame, the feeling of shame, or embarrassment. The inner sense of shame is indicated by the expression *cremer vergoingne* in (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens. After beseeching her husband to leave off his adulterous affair, the accusation of which angers her husband and prompts him to leave the house, the wife makes him return in an attempt to dissuade him once more. Her motivation, the *conteur* comments, is that she "cremoit vergoingne," or, in other words, that she had a sense of shame unlike her husband, who blithely dismisses the gossip of the townsfolk: "La dame, qui cremoit vergoigne,/ Le fet revenir a l'ostel" (ll. 42-43: "The lady, who feared shame, made him return to the house"). The feeling of shame is indicated by *vergoignier* in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier when the priest is first told that the knight wishes to sleep with him. The priest's emotional response at this humiliating proposal can only be described as the feeling of shame:

"La mors me prengne et puist abatre,"
Fait li prestres, qui s'en vergoigne,
"Quant je irai pour tel besoigne!" (ll. 1093-1095)
"May death take me and then beat me down," said the priest, who was ashamed, "When I will go for such a service!"

Being embarrassed to speak one's mind is indicated by *vergoignier* in (59) Le Foteor when the giggling bourgeoise lady approaches the fornicator for hire in order to inquire of his business:

Et cele qui, com ioene feme
Ne se pooit tenir de rire
Quant el i vint ne sot que dire
Si que tote s'en uergoigna" (ll. 166-169 D)
And she who, like a young girl, could not refrain from laughing, when she came there, did not know what to say, so that she was completely embarrassed.

Similarly in (118) Le Jugement the verb *vergoigne* is used to indicate the nun's hesitancy in relating her *bon mot* to the others. The abbess urges her to be unconcerned with *vergoigne* and not to *avoir hontage*, an expression also used to indicate reluctance in speaking:

-"Ma dame, je seroie blasmee!
Par ma foy, ce seroit oultrage!"
Dist l'abbesse: "N'ayez hontage,
Mettez vergongne en nonchaloir.
Cuidez vous de mains en valoir?
Nennil, non! Dictes sans respit!" (ll. 6-11)
"My lady, I would be blamed! By my faith, this would be an outrage!" Said the abbess, "Don't be ashamed, don't be concerned about shame. Do you think you'll be worth less? Not at all! Speak without delay."

The reference to being worth less suggests that, even when indicating hesitation in speaking one's mind, *vergoigne* can still pertain to the experience of shame.

The verb *vergonder* in the fabliaux, like the expressions *honir*, *faire honte*, and *faire hontage*, is used to describe the shame inherent in cuckolding, raping, or revealing a person's adultery to others.[185] The faithful wife in (2) Constant du Hamel, when propositioned by the provost, refuses to *vergonder* her husband by cuckolding him: "Ja mes sire n'ert vergondez,/ Qui m'a mout doucement norrie" (ll. 69-70: My lord will never be shamed, who has very nicely maintained me"). The wife in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, feigning outrage at

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[185]Cf. Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch. They define *vergonder* as "to shame, to dishonor; to violate, to offend; to insult;" and, in the reflexive, "to be ashamed, to be fearful; to bring shame on oneself."

being propositioned by a cleric, tells her servants that if she is not avenged, she will always be *vergondé*:

> Unc mes ne m'avint en ma vie
> Ke hom mesfeiht la vileinie:
> Si il ne seit cher comparé,
> A tuz jurs serrai vergundé. (ll. 533-536)
>
> Never has it happened in my life that a man did villainy to me: if he does not pay for it dearly, I will be shamed forever.

The verb *vergonder* describes the act of revealing one's affair to others in the Anglo-Norman version of (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons. The knight who has just received the gift of being able to make the female pudenda speak decides to test the gift on a priest they encounter who is riding a mare. They ask the mare's pudenda where the priest is going, and the pudenda reply that he is going to visit his mistress. The priest, likely shocked both at the revelation and the manner in which it is made, asks that they not make him *vergonder* in such a fashion:

> Le prestre dit à le cheualer
> "Merci vous cri sire cher
> Quanque i'ai vous vueil doner
> Ne me fetes si vergounder." (ll. 131-134 M)
>
> The priest said to the knight, "Mercy, I beseech you, dear sir, whatever I have I want to give to you, do not shame me so."

In all these usages, a decline in status is implicit. To be cuckolded, propositioned, or to have one's affair made known to others all entailed a decline in status and hence the experience of shame.

As noted above, the Latin *verecundia* originally designated feminine modesty, among other things. Modesty has been identified as the most important of the womanly virtues in medieval epic literature.[186] Interestingly, in both the Lancelot-Grail cycle[187] and the fabliaux *vergoigne* is not a uniquely feminine act nor are women the only characters to be *vergoigné* or *vergondé*. In the fabliaux, a total of four female characters and eight male characters experience *vergoigne* or are *vergoigné* or *vergondé*.

* * *

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[186]Christoph 26-33.

[187]Robreau 173-175.

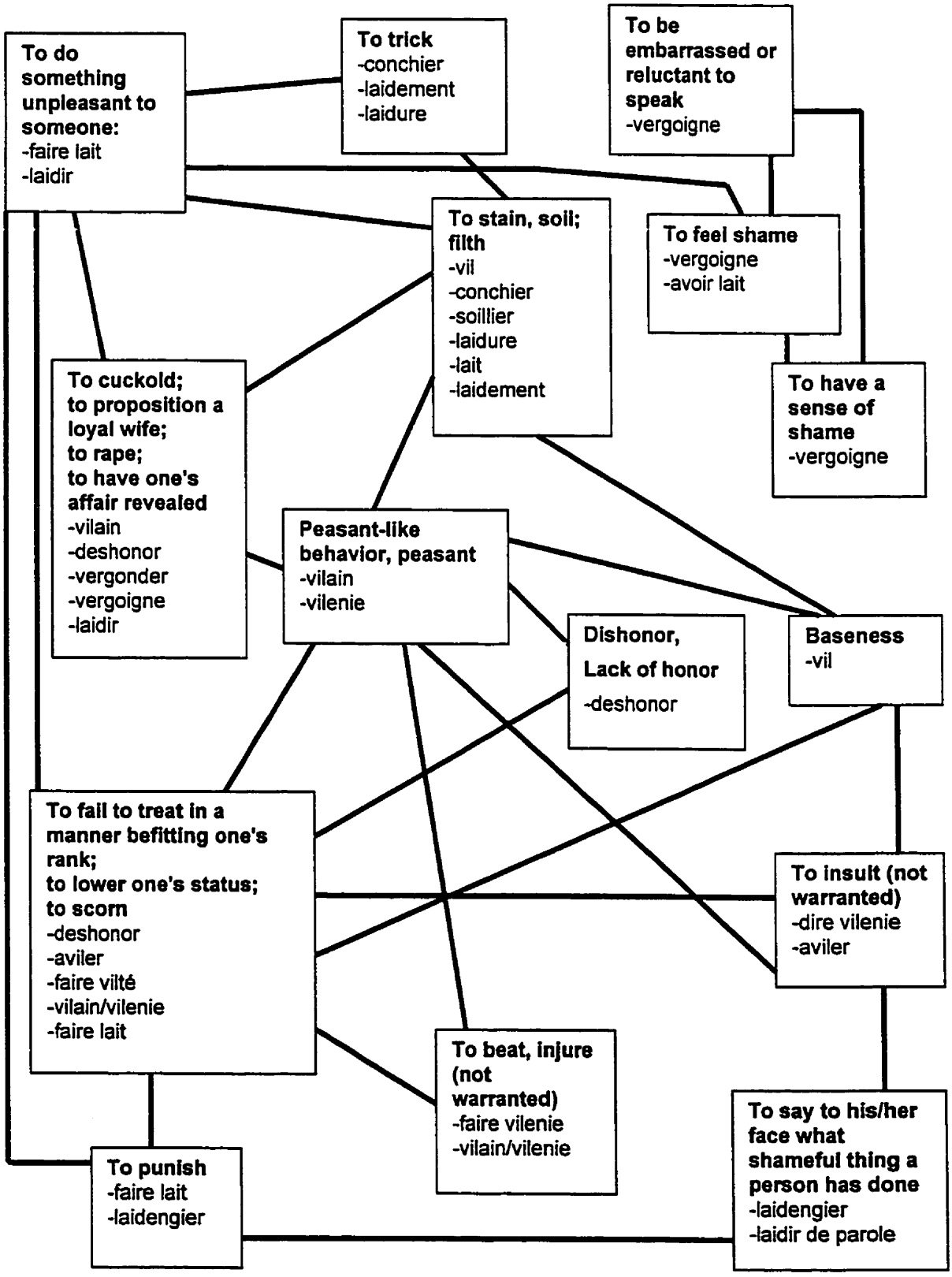
The Semantic Network: Terms Directly Indicating Shame

The web of meanings attached to the various words that directly indicate shame (other than *honte* and *honir*) are illustrated in Figure 2.3. The relationships that can be drawn between the various terms and concepts are again revealing. Having a sense of shame, feeling shame, and being embarrassed or reluctant to speak are related concepts, all expressed by *vergoigne*. Peasant-like behavior, often expressed by terms in the *vilain* family, is linked to acting without honor (*deshonor*) and baseness (*vil*). Both baseness and peasant-like behavior are also related to filth, soiling, and things scatological, characteristics often associated with peasants. "To soil" is indicated by terms from the *lait* family and by *conchier*; interestingly, both also indicate "to trick". The link between "to soil" and "to trick" is somewhat puzzling; it suggests that to be deceived by another was so shameful as to be almost a visceral experience. Terms from the *lait* family in their basic sense indicate doing something unpleasant to another; hence they are used to indicate the acts of tricking, punishing, and saying to a person's face what shameful thing he or she has done. Beatings or insults which are not warranted by a person's actions are indicated by terms from the *vil* or *vilain* family and indicate either the act of lowering a person's status or the failure to treat a person in a manner befitting his or her rank. This failure is also expressed by *deshonor*. Virtually all these terms are used to indicate sexual improprieties: cuckolding a man, raping or propositioning a woman, and revealing one's affair to others. Sexual misconduct could thus be understood as dishonoring, peasant-like, a failure to treat a person in a manner befitting his or her rank, and doing something unpleasant to a person.

Part 2: Situations Indicating the Experience of Shame

Aside from the numerous terms indicating "to shame," a variety of situations in the fabliaux describe certain components of the experience of shame and hence should also be considered indicative of shame. Sometimes these situations are indicated by specific words or expressions, but in other instances there are no "trigger" words that can be considered indicative of shame. As well, "trigger" terms that describe only particular aspects of the experience of shame may not be linked to terms that describe other aspects. Hence for the most part it will not be possible to map out a semantic network for the situations described in this section.

Figure 2.3: The Semantic Network of Terms Indicating Shame (Excluding *Honte, Honir)*



A. Reputation and Gossip

When employed in a negative sense, expressions indicating reputation and gossip convey the sense that a character's reputation has declined or is other than what it should be, a situation that is consistent with the definition of shame as defined above. Such terms include expressions denoting reputation in general: *los*, meaning "praise, honor, reputation;" *pris*, meaning "price, the act of esteeming, worth, reputation;" *prisier* meaning "to value at a certain price, to esteem, to think highly of;" *renom*, meaning "renown, reputation, fame;" *renomer*, meaning "to celebrate, extol, glorify" or, in the negative sense, "to speak unfavorably of, to accuse, to name."[188] Other terms used to describe reputation or gossip are *difame*, indicating "bad reputation, dishonor, disgrace, infamy,"[189] *difamer*, meaning "to slander, to dishonor, to tarnish the reputation of, to strike or maltreat,"[190] and *mesdire* and its derivatives, indicating "to slander, to speak badly of, to assault someone with words."[191] Expressions indicating "to talk" (e.g., *parler*, *dire*) are also used to indicate "to gossip."

In the fabliaux, when such terms are employed in a positive sense to indicate honor and good reputation, they are most frequently paired with each other (as in the expression "*pris* et *los*")[192] or with the word *honor*[193]. In the negative sense of ill repute or slander, they appear most

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188According to Robreau, pp. 95-102, these terms are very close in meaning and indicate reputation and positive notoriety. See also Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

189Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

190Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

191Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

192See (34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 44: "Il ne prisoit ne pris ne los" ("He esteemed neither reputation nor honor"); (93) Guillaume au Faucon l. 122: "Son pris et son los essaucier" ("To elevate his reputation and honor"). See also (16) La Housse partie I, in which the three knights who are brothers of the bride are described as "D'armes proisié et alosé" (l. 108: "Esteemed and praised for their feats in arms"); and (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, in which the wife in her deathbed confession states that she has been *proisie* (l. 123) and had *los* (l. 127) in her lifetime. Robreau in her study of the Lancelot-Grail cycle, pp. 99-100, likewise finds that *los* is most often associated with *pris*.

193(12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille l. 16: "Por honour et por pris conqerre" ("to win honor and esteem"); (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 147 ("A honnour por conquerre los": "Honorably, in order to win renown").

frequently with *blasme* or *blasmer*.[194] Most revealing for our purposes, they occasionally also appear with the word *honte*. The young woman in (4) Auberee, for instance, is said to fear the *los*, *renon*, and *honte* she will suffer if she is found lying naked with her former lover:

> Mieus li vendroit estre a repos
> Qu'el porroit acuillir tel los
> Par ses voisins et tel renon;
> Jamés n'avroit se honte non. (ll. 397-400)
>
> It would be better for her to keep still than it would to gain such a reputation and fame among her neighbors; she would have nothing but shame.

Similarly the king in (43) La Male Honte I, when offered "la male honte" by a peasant who has entered his court, suffers *honte* when the peasant asks him to accept "la male honte" which is rightly his, and subsequently employs the word *mesdire* to describe what the peasant has said:

> Quant li rois l'ot, si ot grant honte.
> "Vilain," dist il, "Tu me mesdiz:
> Mais tu aies honte touz diz!" (ll. 39-41)
>
> When the king hears him, he has great shame. "Peasant," he says, "You slander me: henceforth may you always have shame."

The contexts in which such terms are employed clearly also indicates the experience of shame. In (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, for example, the word *los* occurs in the context of a description of a much-despised seneschal whose reputation is other than what it should be:

> Conquis i avoit un los tel
> Que tretous li mons le haoit
> Qui sa mauvaitié dire ooit. (ll. 46-48)
>
> He had gained such a reputation that everyone hated him who heard talk of his wickedness.

In (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche the provost is described as a knavish scoundrel whose reputation (*pris*) is saved only on account of his great riches:

> Vilains et pautoniers estoit,
> Mes richece l'avoit seurpris,
> Si en ert amendez ses pris... (ll. 14-16)
>
> He was a low fellow and a ruffian, but wealth had overtaken him, and so his reputation was amended on account of it.

His former ill repute again demonstrates a gap between what is and what should be, central to the

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[194]In (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, the noble woman comments in her deathbed confession that a woman who is blamed or slandered (*blasmée*) is often in fact worth more than she who is praised ("la loée): "Sachiez de voir, tele est blasmee/ Qui vaut mout mieus que la loee" (ll. 125-126: "Know this in truth, that she is blamed who is worth more than she who is praised").

experience of shame.

Although they appear but rarely in the fabliaux, the words *difame* and *diffamer* merit some comment. They can be translated as "to dishonor" or "dishonor" as well as "to defame or slander" and "infamy" and so can be considered synonymous with *honte* and *honir*.[195] In all three instances in which the words appear in the fabliaux, there is an emphasis on the presence of others before whom one's status has declined. In (120) Le Sentier battu, the *conteur* observes that no woman would take a man as a lover if she had heard him defamed ("s'oist diffamer") as a poor worker in the craft of love:

> ...il n'est femme terriienne
> Qui ja peüst un homme amer,
> Mes qu'ele l'oïst diffamer
> D'estre mauvés ouvrier en lit
> En fere l'amoureus delit... (ll. 98-102)
>
> There is no woman on earth who is ever able to love a man if she has heard him defamed as a bad worker in bed in making amorous delight...

In (117) La Nonete, an abbess, concerned with the reputation of the abbey (in other words, its standing in the eyes of others), imprisons a nun newly admitted to the house on account of her love affair(s):

> ...[l'abbesse] mieus voet c'on le mette
> Em prison qu'elle s'entremet
> De faire a l'abbie diffame.
> Et pour le jeter hors de blasme
> Fu li lassete em prison mise... (ll. 45-49)
>
> [The abbess] preferred that one put her in prison than that she undertake to bring infamy on the abbey. And so to remove her from blame, was the poor little [nun] put in prison...

The "dishonor" which is indicated by *difame* or *difamer* is always a dishonor that is suffered in the eyes of others.

The word *mesdire*, translated as "to slander, to speak badly of, to assault someone with words,"[196] also merits some comment. It is typically used to describe specific instances in which one character says something shameful about another character, most often to his or her face.[197]

195Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

196Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

197In two fabliaux, *mesidre* is used to describe instances of slander behind one's back. In (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, the adulterous husband says to his wife when she tells him that everyone is

For instance, in (43) La Male Honte I, as we have just seen, the king responds to the peasant who has publicly asked him to accept "la male honte" by saying, "Tu me mesdiz" (l. 40). When St. Paul in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis asks the peasant who has just entered heaven what he did to deserve admittance and calls him a "vilein faus," the peasant responds by saying to St. Paul, "Com estes ore mesdisant" (l. 87 C: "How slanderous you are now").[198] In these examples, accusing another of slandering oneself was not simply a way to protest one's innocence; it was also a way to shame the slanderer in turn. To be *mesdisant*, someone inclined to slander, was considered a shameful negative quality, as is evident by the characterization of the upright butcher of Abeville in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville:

> A Abevile ot un bochier.
> Molt l'avoient si voisin chier:
> N'estoit pas fel ne mesdisant,
> Mes cortois, sages et vaillant,
> Et leaus hom de son mestier... (ll. 7-11)
>
> In Abeville there was a butcher. His neighbors treasured him: he was not wicked nor slanderous, but *courtois*, wise and valiant, and a loyal man in his craft...[199]

A variety of expressions are used to describe what we would term "gossip," most commonly expressions involving *parler*. Hence the priest in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force who maintains a mistress is said to be the subject of much talk: "assez en parloient la gent" (l. 18). The wife in (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens tells her adulterous husband, "tot li mondes en parrole,/ Car tote la vile le set" (ll. 28-29: "Everyone is talking about it, for all the village knows

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talking about his affair, "...n'est mie voirs!/ Gens sont costumiers de mesdire" (ll. 32-33: "...it's not at all true! People are accustomed to gossip"). In (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, the *conteur* begins the story by observing how striving for wealth and honor brings slander and envy:

> Ja n'iert tant biaux ne gracieux,
> Se dix en sunt chiez lui assis,
> Des mesdizans i avra six
> Et d'envieux i avra nuef... (ll. 8-11)
>
> Never will there be anyone so beautiful or gracious that, if 10 people aren't seated at his house, six will be slanderous and nine will be envious.

The conteur proceeds to relate how, one day, the bishop had a great company with him who began to talk about avaricious priests and clerics and impugned in particular the wealthy cleric who is the subject of the fabliaux.

198 See also (43) La Male Honte II ll. 154, 154.2, 154.8; (69) Les Tresces II l. 348; (117) La Nonete ll. 207, 249.

199 Note also (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, in which, as cited in the previous note but one, being "biaux" and "gracieux" is presented as antithetical to being "mesdizans."

it").[200] The verb *dire* is used in (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, in which the *conteur* comments: "...hom dit trop plus de la choze/ Que hom n'i trueve a la parcloze" (ll. 69-70: "...one says much more about something than one finds there in the end").[201] The noun *cri* is used in (120) Le Sentier battu to describe the reputation for a bad thing:

> Le chevalier, qui bien savoit
> Que le cri de tel chose avoit,
> Pour la ramposne ot cuer dolent... (ll. 111-113)
> The knight, who well knew what the reputation for such a thing
> was, on account of the insult had a heavy heart...

References to the result of gossip, shameful acts or qualities being known or made known, are indicated by verbs such as *savoir* and *conoistre*. Hence the priest's mistress in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier threatens him, "Et chi pres n'iert cui n'en chara/ De votre anui ne de ceste conte" (ll. 1213-1214: "And near here there will be no one who will not know of your suffering, nor of this story")[202] Common to all these expressions of course is the sense that one's status in the eyes of others has declined or is other than what it should be. Hence these expressions can all be taken as indicative of the experience of shame.

There is a sharp distinction between gossip and slander in the fabliaux. When characters are denounced to their face, like the king in (43) La Male Honte, they always experience the sentiment of shame or respond with anger or astonishment, reactions typical of those who are shamed, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. While numerous characters fear becoming the subject of gossip, characters who actually are the subject of gossip, such as the husband in (8) La

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200See also (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine l. 118; (69) Les Tresces II l. 23; (111) Le Testament de l'Asne l. 59. The use of *parler* in a positive sense to indicate a good reputation occurs in (4) Auberee l. 17.

201 See also (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 1201-1208.

202A positive reputation is indicated by *conoistre* in the same fabliau, when the priest vows that his house will be known for its hospitality:

> A cel Seignor, qui toute rien
> Fist et forma, veue et promet,
> Se Jhesu en boine le met,
> Que tous jours mais herbregera;
> Et ses osteus connus sera
> Por l'amour Diu et par frankisse... (ll. 1233-1238)
> To the lord, who made and formed everything, he vowed and promised
> that, if Jesus put him in a good position, he would henceforth always
> lodge [travelers] and his lodging will be known [as being] for the love of
> God and for free...

Bourse pleine de Sens and the priest in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force, are unconcerned that their illicit affairs are cause for public discussion.[203] Nowhere in the fabliaux does the awareness that one is being talked about produce the strong feelings of shame and humiliation which arise when characters are denounced to their faces or insulted or mocked. The on-going nature of gossip of course means that the sudden drop in perceived status which typically engenders shame does not occur. As well, characters who are the subject of gossip are talked about precisely because denunciations to their face do no good, as is obviously the case in (9) La Bourse pleine de Sens and (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force. Still there remains a sense that the act of saying something detrimental to one's face is far worse than simple gossip. It requires a response of some kind, either an attempt to insult or shame one's detractor in turn, or an acknowledgement that the denunciation is merited.

We noted above in the discussion of *honor* that the word *honor* is often employed in situations in which the characters concerned are eventually shamed. Such is also sometimes the case for *pris* and *prisier*. Many characters who seek or obtain *pris* are eventually shamed[204] The lord in (93) Guillaume au Faucon, for instance, departs for a tournament in order, "Son pris et son los essaucier" (l. 122: "To increase his honor and reputation"). While gone, his squire propositions his wife and, upon his return home, he unwittingly gives his wife permission to engage in extramarital relations with the young man.[205] Similar to the use of the word *honor*, then, *pris* and *prisier* are used to prepare the reader for the comic climax of the fabliaux. Their

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203The only exception is the husband in (126) Gonbaut, who vigorously denies the rumor his wife has heard concerning his infidelity. He is in fact innocent.

204Exceptions are: (12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille, in which the knight who is the lady's lover is described in very typical noble terms as someone who "erroit par tote la terre/ Por honour et por pris conqerre..." (ll. 15-16: "...journeyed through all the land in order to obtain honor and esteem"); it is the lady's husband, and not her lover, who is shamed in this fabliau; and (possibly) (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 148 M. The young man in (29) Le Vallet aus douze Fames who is described in the opening lines of the fabliaux as "un vallet de mout haut pris" (l. 4 A, E, I: "a young man of great reputation") eventually is so exhausted by the sexual demands of his wife that he reports to the men of the village, "ie suis honni (l. 103 A, 103 A, 124 I). The word *honir* indicates injury here rather than shame, however, although the fact that the husband has allowed himself to be tricked and exhausted by his wife suggests an element of shame as well.

205See also (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche l. 16; (43) La Male Honte l. 149 F. In (124) Trubert, the verb *prisier* functions in a similar fashion. The knights, impressed by the battered appearance of Trubert's arms and armour upon his return from battle and his tales of great prowess, exclaim, "Cist sires fet molt a prisier" (l. 1989: "This knight does much to be esteemed"); in fact, Trubert has broken his lance and battered his shield against a stone, and so has done nothing to be esteemed.

presence foreshadows their eventual absence.

B. Being Scorned or Considered of Little Worth

Being scorned or deemed of little worth usually entails a diminution of one's standing, either in one's own eyes or in the eyes of others, and hence can be considered indicative of the experience of shame. Numerous expressions in the fabliaux are used to describe being little valued by others. Most common by far is the expression *tenir por* or *tenir à* followed by a noun or adjective indicating a person or thing of little value or someone who is typically scorned. Also commonly used is the verb *prisier* or the noun *valoir* followed by an object of little value (*tarte*, *gante*, *maille*, *bouton*, *deux oefs*). Other forms of comparison to persons, animals (dogs), or objects of little value are also used. A few examples of these various usages illustrates their appurtenance to the experience of shame. The two thieves featured in (6) Barat et Haimet who discover that their former colleague Travers has cleverly stolen a ham from them are clearly experiencing a decline in their perceived status when they rue their loss with the words, "Bien nous porroit tenir por merde,/ S'ainsi li laissomes ravoir" (ll. 456-457: "Well would he consider us shit, if we let him have it again thus"). The expression *tenir à glote* expresses the wife's fear of being held in low esteem by her husband in (70) Le Sohait des Vez. She refrains from asking her husband for payment of the marriage debt out of fear that he might deem her lecherous:

> Mais ne l'esvoille ne ne bote,
> Qu'i la tenist sanpres a glote!
> Par cele raison s'est ostee
> Del voloir et de la pansee
> Que la dame avoit envers lui... (ll. 65-69)
>
> But she does not waken him or poke him, for he at once would consider her gluttonous! For this reason the lady removed herself from the desire and the thought which she had for him.

So too the porter in (47) Les trois Boçus may be understood as experiencing shame when he imagines that the dead hunchback considers him a peasant because the porter is unable to throw him into the river without having him somehow reappear:

> "Il me tient bien por païsant,
> Que je nel puis tant comporter
> Que ja se vueille deporter
> D'aprés moi adés revenir!" (ll. 242-245)
>
> "Well does he deem me a peasant, for I can not carry him in such a way that he does not wish always to amuse himself by straightway coming after me!"

A comparison to a person of low worth similarly indicates the experience of shame in (25) La

Damoisele qui sonjoit, in which the young girl tells her rapist that she initially put up a defense against him so as not be worse than a *ribaude* (tramp): "Se de vos ne me deffant,/ Don sui je pire que ribaude" (ll. 62-63: "If I do not defend myself against you, then I am worse than a tramp"). A rather humorous comparison to a rain cape underscores the wide gap between the actual status and the ideal status a husband should have in the eyes of his wife in (83) La Dame escoillee. The knight under the domination of his wife tells his guest:

> "Si ne li chalt s'en ai enuie:
> Ge ne li sui fors chape à pluie,
> A son bon fait, noient au mien,
> De mon conmant ne feroit rien." (ll. 99-102)
> "She is concerned only that I suffer: I am nothing to her except a rain cape, she acts only in her own interests, not mine, she would carry out nothing of what I command.[206]

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[206]Other examples of the use of the expression *tenir à* include: (34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 221 A (*tenir à bricon*); (70) Les Sohait des Vez l. 207 (*tenir à estot*); and (74) Le Sacristain I l. 397 (*tenir à bricon*). Other examples of the use of the expression *tenir por* include: (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur l. 242 (*tenir por larron*); (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 157 (*tenir por putains*); (73) Le Maignien qui foti la Dame l. 107 (*tenir por fol*); (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 426 (*tenir por bestes*); (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 211 (*tenir à musart*). An example of the use of the expression *valoir* to indicate the experience of shame occurs in (35) Gombert et les deus Clers l. 143 (*valoir une tarte*); and (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 927 (*valoir une pomme porrie*). Other examples of the use of the expression *prisier* to indicate the experience of shame include: (1) Estormi l. 457 (*prisier deus oefs*); (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville l. 403 (*prisier petit*); (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 104 (*prisier .II. mauves* [seagulls]); (117) La Nonete l. 94 (*prisier peu*); (124) Trubert l. 592 (*prisier une maille*); l. 1062 (*prisier un bouton*). Other comparisons to people or things of little worth occur in: (12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille, in which the wife tells her husband that accepting as a gift a coat that has been made for another is something which *jongleurs* and not knights do (ll. 212-217); (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine, in which the husband describes how he feared the gossip he would have to endure if his ears were cut off, as was done to criminals (ll. 117-118); (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, in which the husband is said to act, "A guise de coart mauvais..." (l. 248: "In the manner of a bad coward..."); (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force, in which the mother complains to the bishop that her son, a priest, does her no more honor than he would do to a dog (ll. 51-52); (58) L'Esquiriel, in which the mother tells her daughter that only women of "trop mal teche" (l. 27.10) say the word for the thing that hangs between men's legs; (64) Les Putains et les Lecheors, in which the knights throw food to *lecheors* like they throw food to the dogs (ll. 62-63); (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers I, in which the miller decides to lodge the two clerics whose horse and wheat he has just stolen on the grounds that if he turned them away for the night he would be worse than a dog (l. 151); and (102) Le Prestre comporté, in which the tavernkeeper who thinks some thieves are trying to trick him tells them they must think he is a very young child (l. 627), badly brought up (l. 641), and a proven fool (l. 654). The prior in the same fabliau, who faints from fright upon seeing a motionless figure in the abbey latrine, harshly reproves himself when he comes to his senses and states that he is "plus jovenes que nus" (l. 907: "more youthful [in the sense of flighty] than anyone").

These expressions indicating "to be scorned" or "to be held in low esteem" are occasionally linked with words from the *honte/honir* family or other terms directly indicative of shame. For example, the friars in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre, upon realizing they have been tricked by the dying priest into publicly revealing their greed, protest that they have not been *ahonti* and then in the next breath use the expression *tenir por bobert* (deem us idiots) to describe what the priest must think of them. The shame they endure is obvious from the context:

> Nos aveis vos ci por dechoivre
> Mandeis, foz prestes entesté?
> Avoir nos cuidiés ahonteis,
> Mais nen aveis, par saint Obert,
> Bien nos teneis or por bobert. (ll. 291-295)
>
> You sent for us [to come] here in order to deceive us, idiotic struck-in-the-head priest? You think to have shamed us, but you have not, by Saint Obert; you well consider us idiots.

The expression *valoir de mains* is coupled with *hontage* and *vergoigne* in (118) Le Jugement in which the abbess urges the nun reluctant to speak her *bel mot* with the words:

> "N'ayez hontage,
> Mettez vergongne en non chaloir.
> Cuidez vous de mains en valoir? (ll. 8-10)
>
> Don't be ashamed, don't be concerned about embarrassment. Do you think to be worth less?

A comparison to being blind and crippled is coupled with *vilenie* and an expression indicating a lack of *honor* in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, in which the knight warns his squire against the disadvantages of doing anything for short-term gain which would cost him his honor:

> "Huet, cil ne gaaigne mie
> Qui fait conquest par vilenie,
> Ainz pert honor par tot le monde;
> Ja mais ne beau dit ne beau conte
> Nen ert de lui a cort retret.
> Mielz vosisse estre contret
> Que ge t'eüsse orainz creü... " (ll. 325-331)
>
> "Hugh, he gains nothing who makes a gain through villainy, rather he loses honor through all the world; never will a beautiful account or story be told about him in a court. I would have done better to wish to be crippled than to have believed you just now [when you recommended that I not return the clothes.]"

Interestingly, verbs or nouns directly indicating "scorn" or "to scorn," such as *desdaign*,

despiser and *despit*,[207] appear infrequently. One of the few instances in which *despit* occurs is in (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine. A fisherman, seeking to test why his wife loves him, pretends to have been castrated. Immediately upon telling her of his misfortune, she begins to pack up her belongings and leave, calling him *despit*:

> "Ja mes avec vos ne seré:
> Un autre home respouseré,
> Qui sera jane et remuant,
> Car vos ne valez pas un gant,
> Einz estes mavés et despiz,
> Ne ja mes amez ne serviz
> Ne serez vos de fame nee." (ll. 135-141)

> I will never be with you: I will marry another man, who is young and lively, for you are not worth a glove, rather you are bad and despised, nor will you ever be loved or served by any woman born."[208]

The noun *mespris* and the verb *mesprendre* are used almost exclusively to describe the act of wronging another person and will be discussed in the analysis of the vocabulary of guilt.

The expression *tenir por* is often employed in situations in which a character fears another is trying to deceive him or her or after some deception has occurred. The word following *tenir por* in such situations is usually an indicator of stupidity or foolishness, or describes someone easily deceived, such as *fol*, *sot*, *musart*, *ivre*, *beste*, *paisant*, and *bobert*. For example, in (74) Le Sacristain III, the tavernkeeper says to the two thieves who offer to sell him a smoked *bacon* at half price,

> ...je n'ai cure
> Que ja pour musart tenuz soie
> D'acheter chose que ne voie... (ll. 430-432)

207Greimas.

208See also (29) Le Vallet aus douze Fames l. 70; (46) La Coille Noire l. 118; (83) La Dame escoillee l. 574; (108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit pour Morele sa Provende avoir l. 233. In all of these instances, *despit* or *despiser* are used to refer to disdain of one's spouse and/or failure to pay the marriage debt. In (34) Berengier au lonc Cul the verb *despiter* describes how the boastful knight treats low-born people like himself: "mout despisoit gent menue" (l. 47: "he greatly despised the common folk"). The verb *despiter* here describes not so much how their status is diminished, but how he elevates his own. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier sodomy is referred to as "cose despite" (l. 1058). The noun *desdaigne* occurs in a similar context in (65) La Pucele qui voloit voler, where the *conteur* advises women not to let their "orguieus desdaing" (l. 142 I) get the better of them and cause them not to marry the "bons maris" (l. 132 I) who present themselves, but instead marry "garcons", "cherretiers" (plowmen) or ".j. vilain" (ll. 137, 139 I).

I don't care to be deemed an idiot for buying something which I don't see...[209]

The curious moral at the end of (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier, a moral which the editors of the NRCF suggest was added later since it appears to bear no connection to the fabliau, does in fact fit the story quite well if one interprets the phrase *tenir por ivre* as a phrase indicating that the wife can scorn her husband because she has deceived him:

Et si li fet vilein chapel
Que por ivre le fet tenir. (ll. 237-238)

And so she makes a villainous chapel so that she can treat him like a drunk.[210]

Sometimes the expression *tenir por fol* or *tenir por sot* is used to describe when a character does something to his or her disadvantage. Indeed, this is one of the basic senses of *fol*.[211] The element of shame in such situations may be slight or non-existent. The husband in (17) Les Braies au Cordelier, for instance, uses the expression *tenir por fols* to describe what he and his companion should think about themselves for awakening late on the morning they are to depart for the market:

"Tant avons dormi, par toz sainz,
Que por fous nos poons tenir!
Ainz qu'a Meün puission venir
Sera il bien pres de midi." (ll. 93-96)

209See also (7) Boivin de Provins, in which the pimps are "tenuz pour sot" (l. 315 P) on account of the heavy costs they incurred in attempting to swindle a peasant who in fact was swindling them; (47) Les trois Boçus, in which the porter fears an enchanted corpse "me tient bien por païsant" (l. 242: "well deems me a peasant") when he magically reappears each time the porter buries him; (46) La Coille noire, in which the wife "se tint por fole" (l. 110) when her husband tricks her into admitting before the bishop's court that her poor hygiene is the cause of their marital difficulties; (61) Brifaut, in which a thief "tint por fol" (l. 42) a peasant whom he has robbed; (124) Trubert, in which the duke tells the doctor who is badly beating him as part of a supposed cure, "Je cuit vos me tenez por fol!" (l. 1281: "I think you consider me a fool!"); and (74) Le Sacristain II, in which the husband tells the sacristan about to sleep with his wife, "Sachiez que ge vos tieg por fol" (l. 334). Usually it is the lover who considers the husband a fool because he has tricked him; here, the husband turns the tables by laying a trap for the sacristan and hence is able to consider him a fool instead.

210See also (102) Le Prestre comporté, in which the priest says he is not so drunk that he would leave a dead man lying there, something which would be contemptible because it would inevitably lead to an accusation of murder: "N'encor ne sui je pas si yvres/ Que jou le laisse ichi gisant..." (ll. 534-535: "I am not yet so drunk that I would leave him lying here...").

211Cf. F.R.P. Akehurst, "La folie chez les troubadours," Mélanges de philologie romane offerts à Charles Camproux, Centre d'études occitanes 1 (Montpellier: Université Paul-Valéry, 1978) 19-28.

"We have slept so much, by all the saints, that we can consider
ourselves fools! Before we get to Meün, it will almost be noon."[212]

Many of the expressions indicating "to be scorned" or "to be deemed of little worth" are employed in situations in which characters, reflecting on the impact of some event on their status, determine their course of action based on the criterion of avoiding shame and not being deemed something of little worth. The expressions are thus used in situations in which shame is an effective deterrent. Typical of this usage is the seneschal's vow in (124) Trubert. He says he would not consider himself worth a copper coin if he did not have Trubert dragged through town:

Je ne me pris une maaille
Se je traïner ne le faz:
Ce est li hons que je plus haz!" (ll. 1603-1605)
I would not consider myself worth a copper coin if I didn't have
him dragged [through town]: he is the man whom I hate the most!

Likewise in (74) Le Sacristain II the peddler shames the wife into giving him some of the ham hanging in the attic by saying that he would have received much more from any other peasant household in the area:

"Il n'a en cest païs vilain
Qui assez plus ne me prestast
Et volentiers ne me donast,
Tot autresi c'on çaienz fait!" (ll. 690-693)
"There is no peasant in this country who would not have lent me
much more, and willingly given to me, completely contrary to
what one does in this household!"

Many of the other examples cited above also illustrate this usage. To be *tenir por* something of little value was plainly an effective motivator in the world of the fabliaux.

C. Public Disclosure

Another situation in the fabliaux that indicates the experience of shame is when a character's faults or failings are revealed to others. Such situations entail a diminution of that person's status in the eyes of others and hence are indicative of shame.

212See also (51) Les deus Changeors, in which the wife says that those who do not maintain their love in secret can "por sos tenir" (l. 40). Note also (104) La Feme qui cunquie son Baron, in which the lover considers himself a fool (l. 32: "se tint ... pour sot") when he hears the husband's voice and realizes he has come home unexpectedly. There is no real shame in either usage; the expressions simply indicate that the lover or lovers who allow themselves to get caught have done something stupid which could be very much to their disadvantage.

Historical records indicate that the act of publicly denouncing or publicly revealing a person's offenses was a serious matter that often led to the courts. Slanderous accusations were vigorously denounced by the victim in court, and court records regularly note that the insults took place "publica et coram pluribus."[213] Villagers often journeyed to the market or fair at nearby towns when they wanted to defame another so as to make the accusation before a large number of people.[214] Charivaris, *chevauchées de l'âne*, *la course* run by adulterers, the parades of *carnaval,* and the rites of excommunication entailed revealing an offender's wrongdoing to the entire village, neighborhood or parish.[215] The humiliating processions that preceded criminal executions often involved the offense being read out at each cross-road to all passers-by, presumably with the intention of disclosing the offense to as great a number of people as possible.[216]

In the fabliaux, situations in which a character's faults or failings are revealed to others are often described by terms from the vocabulary of shame. Often the *conteur* takes care to mention the large number of people who witness the disclosure. The tavernkeeper in (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne, for instance, who is made "honteus" (l. 325) when the priest treats him like a madman, is shamed following a Sunday mass attended by a great many people. The *conteur* emphasizes the number of people attending the mass: "Par un jour fu de diemenche,/ Que au moustier vont mout de gens" (ll. 261-262: "One day it was Sunday, many people came to the church"). After the service the priest calls upon all of the parishioners to assist in a ritual for restoring the tavernkeeper to his right mind. The *conteur* notes how they all comply: "Trestous ses parrochiens appele;/ Chascuns entour li s'atroppele" (ll. 300-301: "...He called all his parishioners; they all gathered around him"). Similarly in (43) La Male Honte II the *conteur* draws attention to the number of people who witness the peasant's affronts to the king. Each time the peasant offers the *male* to the king, the *conteur* in at least one of the versions emphasizes the number of people who witness what to all watching appears to be a blatant

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213Ronald Gosselin, "Honneur et violence à Manosque (1240-1260)," Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du Moyen-Age. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. Michel Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, Service des Publications, 1987) 45-63.

214Claude Gauvard, "Violence citadine et réseaux de solidarité: L'exemple français aux XIVe et XVe siècles," Annales E.S.C. 48.5 (1993): 1115-1116.

215See above, Chapter One, n. 44.

216See above, Chapter One, n. 55.

attempt to shame the king. At the first attempt, the *conteur* notes that "les barons" (l. 34) were with the king. At the second attempt, the *conteur* states that the king "entor lui avoit/ De chevalerie grant masse,/ Et tote la corz i amasse (ll. 78-80: "...had around him a great mass of knights, and all the court amassed there"). At the third offering, the *conteur* describes the number of witnesses present yet again:

> Des barons fu la sale plainne,
> Et li vilains forment se painne;
> Mes ainz que soit dedenz entrez,
> A toz les barons encontrez
> Et lou roi tot premierement,
> Qui aloient communement
> Messe escouter a un mostier. (ll. 121-127)

The room was filled with barons, and the peasant struggled [to get in]; but before he [could] enter, he encountered all the barons, and the king first of all, who were going together to hear mass in a church.[217]

Even in the absence of other terms from the vocabulary of shame, situations in which the *conteur* emphasizes the large number of people who witness a shameful revelation can be understood as indicative of shame. Hence in (2) Constant du Hamel, when the *conteur* makes careful note of the size of the crowd who witness the three men who are burned, covered in feathers, chased and seized upon by some dogs after trying to cuckold Constant, the experience of shame can be understood. The *conteur* notes how the three identify themselves to all. Plainly their status has declined:

> Ez vos la presse qui engroisse:
> Tote la gent de la parroisse
> I acorent de totes parz,
> Et par bussons et par essarz.
> Por ce que mal atornez furent,
> Poi de lor voisins les connurent;
> Devant ce que il se nomerent... (ll. 844-850)

Behold the crowd which grows: all the people of the parish run there from all parts, both from the bush and the fields. Because they were in such a bad state, few of their neighbors knew them; until they named themselves...

217See also (4) Auberee ll. 380, 383; (17) Les Braies au Cordelier ll. 268-271, 279; (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force ll. 71-72; (60) Le Chapelain ll. 251, 255; (74) Le Sacristain I l. 458; II l. 772; (91) Le Prestre et Alison l. 398; (99) L'Anel qui faisoit les vis grans et roides l. 28; (115) Les Braies le Priestre l. 80; (120) Le Sentier battu l. 55; (122) Les trois Dames de Paris ll. 189, 210-211, 265; (125) Le Moigne l. 30; (127) Le Vescie a Prestre ll. 181-184, 192, 239-240, 310-312.

Similarly in (81) Le Prestre teint, the priest announces at mass that the dyer and his wife are excommunicated for assault. The *conteur* again stresses the size of the crowd and the public nature of the disclosure:

> Quant venu sunt li parrochien,
> Et cil de pres et cil de loing... (ll. 193-194)
> Si lor a dit, voiant la gent... (l. 199)
> When the parishioners came, both from near and from far... he said to them, before everyone present...

Again the experience of shame is likely indicated.[218]

In the *Morte d'Arthur* and the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle, noise often accompanies the revelation of a character's offense. When knights insult or denounce others, they almost invariably do so in loud voices, speaking in full cry so that all might hear their accusations.[219] The same holds true in the fabliaux. In many instances the *conteur* explicitly notes the loud voice used to make a denunciation that causes shame. The peasant in the various versions of (43) La Male Honte makes his offerings in a loud voice:

> La coumence en haute a huchier,
> Que bien l'oïrent prince et conte... (I ll. 69-70)
> Li rehuche en haute et reconte... (I l. 102)
> Li vilains hautement parrole... (II l. 81)
> As soon as he entered the church, he called him loudly, so that all heard him, prince and count... He called him again loudly and told him... The peasant spoke loudly...

The priest in (2) Constant du Hamel who excommunicates Constant and his wife does do in a loud voice before all those in attendance at Sunday mass:

> Un diemaine avint ainsi
> Que li provoires sermona;
> Contreval son motier garda,

218See also (10) Jouglet l. 394; (37) La vieille Truande ll. 140-141; (102) Le Prestre comporté ll. 1070-1071; (111) Le Testament de l'Asne ll. 57-58; (117) La Nonete ll. 212-213; (126) Gonbaut ll. 109-117, 134-136; and (124) Trubert, in which the *conteur* makes repeated reference to the number of people who witness each trick which Trubert plays on the duke (ll. 391; 944-946; 1404). Note also (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons ll. 469-477, in which the countess also speaks in a loud voice. She is likely attempting to humiliate the visiting knight in revenge for his humiliation of her maidservant the night before.

219Mark Lambert, Malory: Style and Vision in Le Morte Darthur (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) 193-194. Noise was also an integral part of the charivari. See Claude Gauvard and Altan Gokalp, "Les conduits de bruit et leur signification à la fin du Moyen Age: Le charivari," Annales E.S.C. 29 (1974): 693-704.

Sire Costant vit divant soi.
Il ne li dist pas en requoi,
Mais si halt que tuit l'entendirent... (ll. 187-192)

Thus it happened one Sunday that the priest was giving a sermon; he looked down his church, and saw Sir Constant before him. He said to him, not quietly, but in such a loud voice that everyone would hear him...[220]

Likewise when insults are given, the *conteur* often makes note of the loud voice with which they are uttered. In (45) Le Prestre et les deus Ribaus, for instance, the priest who tricks the two scoundrels insults the pair in a loud voice: "Puis lor escrie a haute vois" (l. 267: "Then he shouted at them in a loud voice"). In (76) La Plantez, the Norman speaks loudly in denouncing the tavernkeeper for his pride:

Au tavernier escrie haut:
"Sire vasaus, se Deus me saut,
De ton orgoil mestier n'avoie!" (ll. 29-31)

To the tavernkeeper he cried out loudly: "Sir vassal, so may God save me, I have no need of your pride!"

In (114) La Gageure, the *conteur* devotes three lines to describing the loud voice with which the noble woman insults her cousin for allowing herself to be ravished, causing the noble woman to lose a wager:

Et sa dame ly escria,
E hastivement li parla
Ou grosse voiz, o longe aleyne:
"Gwenchez trestresse, gwenchez puteyne!
Gwenchez! Dieu te doint mal fyn!
J'ay perdu le tonel de vyn." (ll. 83-88)

And the lady called out to her, and quickly spoke to her with a loud voice and a deep breath: "Get away traitress, get away whore! Get

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220See also (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons in which the countess "parla en haut" (l. 477) in asking the knight if it is true that he can make certain parts of the female anatomy speak; and (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force, in which the mother, complaining to the bishop and his court because her son is failing to provide adequately for her, points out the man she wishes the court to think is her son by crying out in a loud voice:

A l'evesque cria en haut:
"Sire, sire, se Dieus me saut,
Mes fiuz est cil cras prestre la." (ll. 97-99)

She cried out loudly to the bishop: "Sir, sir, so may God save me, my son is that fat priest there."

See also (42) Le Fevre de Creeil. When the blacksmith catches his sergeant and his wife in a compromising situation, he speaks in a loud voice: "s'escria a mout hauz cris" (l. 148: "he cried out in a very loud voice").

away! May God give you a bad end! I have lost the measure of wine."[221]

Even when characters cry out for help, an element of shame is often present. In the second episode of (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel I, the woman calls on her neighbors for assistance when her husband seems to have gone insane. He is bound by his neighbors, hand and foot, and is humiliated by the experience because in fact he is not insane: his wife has schemed to make it appear so in order to hide her adultery. The loud voice with which she has alerted her neighbors causes a crowd to gather and diminishes his status in the eyes of all:

Et la dame a hatue voiz crie:
"Harou! aïde, bone gent!"
Et il i vindrent esraument. (ll. 162-164)
Cil de toutes pars l'ont saisi.
Li preudom fu si esbahi
Que il ne sot qu'il peüst dire.
Chascuns le desache et detire,
Les mains li lient et les piez:
Bien est matez et cunchiiez. (ll. 175-180)

And the lady cried out in a loud voice: "Help, help, good people!" And they came at once. ... They grabbed him all around. The good man was so shocked that he did not know what he could say. Everyone grabbed and pulled him, they tied his hands and feet: he was well defeated and tricked.[222]

Historical records show that when an individual caught a criminal in the act, it was expected that he or she raise the "hue and cry" and make as much noise as possible in giving chase. This was most obviously a way to enlist the help of one's neighbors in catching the criminal, but it also served formally to launch criminal proceedings if the criminal was known or caught. In the case of adultery or rape, it served to prolong the act so that its occurrence could be verified.[223] Less obviously, it could also bring shame upon either the victim or the criminal. The

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221 See also (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier, in which the assemblage of people at court cry out their agreement with the fool's verdict: "Lors s'escrïent trestuit ensanble" (l. 58: "Then they all cried out together").

222 An identical situation is described in (126) Gonbaut, in which the wife calls her neighbors when her husband appears to have lost his mind and cut off his own tongue and *vit* (ll. 109-117, 134-136). See also (74) Le Sacristain II l. 782.

223 See Harold J. Berman, Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983) 60; R. Howard Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) 49 ff.; and Prevenier 264, 270.

fabliaux provide evidence of this overlap between the realm of justice and the experience of shame. In several fabliaux characters *huer*, *huchier*, *escrier en haut* or cry *harou!* when they discover a crime and the experience of shame then follows. In version II of (74) Le Sacristain, for instance, Tibout the peasant cries out when he wants people to think the monk has stolen his horse. His ruse succeeds: a hundred people run after the monk, thinking him mad. The monk's status obviously diminishes in their eyes.[224]

> Li vileins si s'est escriez:
> "Harou! Harou! molt hautement.
> Enprés le moine en vont tel cent,
> Qu'il cuident bien qu'il soit desvé. (ll. 770-773)
>
> The peasant then cried out: "Help! Help!" very loudly. At once a hundred people chased after the monk, for they well thought that he had gone mad.[225]

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[224]Although he is not explicitly said to be shamed, he is mocked, as described below. If he were alive, he would likely suffer shame like the husband in (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel or the tavernkeeper in (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne who are shamed when they are treated like madmen.

[225]See also (21) Les Perdris, in which the husband shouts after the priest who has apparently stolen his partridges: " se li escrie..." (l. 115: "he shouted at him"), and "Puis s'escrie a granz alenees.." (l. 117: "then he shouted using the full force of his lungs"). What the husband says to the priest is a double entendre that can be understood both as a demand to return the birds and a vow to castrate him; the priest interprets his words in the latter sense and fears that he may be*honiz* (l. 85). Hence the shouting is understood by the priest as a hue and cry. See also (27) Le Prestre crucefié for a humorous twist on the hue and cry. A priest poses as a crucifix in order to hide in the workshop of the husband whom he has just cuckolded. The husband, who carves crucifixes for a living, readily spies the priest and castrates the man, telling his wife that he has made a mistake by making the private parts of the crucifix too big. The priest immediately flees and the husband calls after him:

> S'est escrié a mout hauz cris:
> "Seignor, prenez mon croucefis
> Qui orendroit m'est eschapé!" (ll. 77-79)
>
> Then he cried in a very loud voice: "Good men, seize my crucifix which has just now escaped from me!"

Alerted by the husband's cries, he is beaten and seized by others. Although he is not explicitly said to be shamed, certainly being forced to flee naked through the streets would have caused some shame, as in (91) Le Prestre et Alison. In two fabliaux, it is the person who raises the hue and cry who is shamed. In (61) Brifaut, the ignorant peasant raises a cry when he realizes he has been robbed: "En haut commença a huchier" (l. 36: "Then he loudly raised a cry"). It is he, however, and not the thief who is shamed when he is treated in a disdainful fashion by the thief. Similarly in (106) Le fol Vilain the ignorant peasant raises the hue and cry when he confuses his own shadow with a thief:

> D'une grant geule qu'il avoit
> A escriet: "Or cha, baron!

Huer literally meant "to cry out, to shout, to speak in a loud voice, to pursue with calls or cries,"[226] and *huchier* indicated "to call in a loud voice, to command someone to come in a loud voice, to proclaim, to publicly cry out."[227] These words were used not only to denote raising the hue and cry, but could also be used to describe the noise which groups of people make when they mock someone.[228] Version I of (74) Le Sacristain, describing the same scene in which the cleric rides through the streets mounted on a horse, describes the crowd which *huent* him not as raising the hue and cry, but as mocking him:

> Du pule i ot plus de vint mile.
> De moine s'esmervellent tuit,
> Ki ensi vient par si grant bruit:
> "Fremés les huis, fremés, fremés!
> Ci vient uns moines tous armés!"
> Tout le gabent et tout le huent,
> Maint pot et maint torçon li ruent.
> A l'abé conta uns vilains:
> "Sire, ci vient li secretains,
> Cui on va huant comme fol ..." (ll. 458-467)
> Por le noise et por l'esfroi
> Ke la jent aloient menant,
> S'en va vers le moustier bruant... (ll. 480-482)

There were more than twenty thousand people. All marveled at the monk, who came with great noise: "Close the doors! Close them! Close them! Here comes a monk well-armed!" All mocked him and shouted after him; they threw many pots and handfuls of straw at him. A peasant told the abbot: "Sir, the sacristan is coming here, whom everyone is mocking like a fool..." On account of the

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> Ves ci Robuedin le laron!"
> Tant a criet et bas et haut... (ll. 26-29)

With the great yap that he had, he cried out, "Now here, sir! Behold Robuedin the thief!" He cried out so much, both low and high...

Two brothers hearing his cries set his hay on fire so as to flush out the thief. Although he is not explicitly said to suffer shame as a result of this incident, many of his other misadventures described in the fabliaux entail doing status-diminishing things that are described as shameful in other fabliaux.

226Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

227Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

228Cf. Robreau 135 on the importance which noise assumes in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle when a character is *hué*.

noise and the din that the people were making, he went towards the church accompanied by the noise.[229]

Those who witness the revelation of a character's offense in the fabliaux are most often the shamed individual's peers. Hence many characters find their offenses revealed to their fellow-parishioners, as in the examples of denunciations at Sunday mass cited above. Villagers are denounced before their neighbors; the priest in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, for instance, angry with his mistress, threatens to tell "all the neighbors" ("Trestout li voisin du visnage" [l. 1030]) about her misdeed. The failings of the religious are likewise revealed to their colleagues in holy orders, as in the case of the priest in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force who is accused of maintaining a concubine before an assembly of priests at the bishop's court. Nobles are humiliated before members of the court. The arrogant young squire in (37) La vieille Truande, for instance, finds himself forced to admit that his mother is a beggar woman in the presence of a "haus home" (l. 140: "noble man") and his company coming from court. The young knight and lady in (120) Le Sentier battu similarly humiliate each other in the presence of a noble company of knights and ladies. The bourgeois too find themselves humiliated before members of their own class. The butcher in (115) Les Braies le Priestre, for instance, is revealed as a cuckold before his companions at the market.

Sometimes characters are shamed before those over whom they hold some power. Priests, for example, almost always find themselves shamed before the members of their parish, like the priest in (91) Le Prestre et Alison who is discovered by his parishioners lying naked with a prostitute. Kings and counts are likewise shamed before their subjects, as in (43) La Male Honte and (124) Trubert, and bishops before their men, as in (99) L'Anel qui faisoit les vis grands et roides. We find a parallel to this in the inversions of *carnaval* or the Feast of Fools, in which abbots and ecclesiastical or civil authorities were mocked by rank-and-file clerics or the young men of the town.[230] In the case of priests whose shameful failings are disclosed to their

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229See also (94) Le Prestre qui dist la Passion, in which the crowd of people at mass cry out together to the priest to hurry up and begin the readings -- he has lost his place -- and then *huchier* him: "tot ensanble s'escrioient.../ Tant huchierent et ça et la/ Que li prestres lor commença..." (ll. 13, 19-20: "All together they cried out... They called out so much, here and there, that the priest then began...").

230On the feast of fools, see Enid Welsford, The Fool: His Social and Literary History (Gloucester, Massachussets: Peter Smith, 1966)199-219; E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), ch. 13-15. On *carnaval*, see especially Martine Grinberg in "Carnaval et société urbaine XIVe - XVIe siècles: Le royaume dans la ville," Ethnologie française, 4.3 (1974): 215-244.

flock, there are also echoes of a censure of hypocrisy, a theme regularly encountered in the fabliaux.[231]

In the case of sexual offenses in the fabliaux, the shame that comes with revelation is sometimes compounded by being caught or seen naked. This recalls a common punishment visited on adulterers in medieval France, *la course*, in which the guilty party, usually naked but sometimes clothed only in a chemise, was forced to run naked through the town or village, subject to jeers and blows or, more usually, a whipping or a beating with rods from all those watching.[232] Several fabliaux seem to evoke *la course*. The lecherous priests in (27) Le Prestre crucefié, (91) Le Prestre et Alison and (81) Le Prestre teint are all forced to flee without their clothes after having been caught naked, either about to have intercourse or having just completed the act. That they are naked seems to contribute substantially to the shame they experience. The priest in (81) Le Prestre teint, for instance, runs off with his hands over his genitals: "Li prestre a

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231 Marie-Thérèse Lorçin, Façons de sentir et de penser: Les fabliaux français (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1979) 98. Note for instance the comments of the noble woman in (56) Frere Denise when she denounces the friar (though only in front of her husband) for his hypocrisy:

La dame a le frere apelei,
Puis li dist, oiant son seigneur,
Si grant honte c'onques greigneur
Ne fu mais a nul home dite:
"Fauz papelars, fauz ypocrite... (ll. 240-244)
Teil gent font bien le siecle pestre
Qui par defors cemblent boen estre
Et par dedens sunt tuit porri... (ll. 249-251)
Vos deffendeiz aus jones gens
Et les dances et les quaroles,
Violes, tabours et citoles,
Et toz deduiz de menestreiz.
Or me dites, sire haut reiz,
Menoit sainz Fransois teile vie?" (ll. 258-263)

The woman called the friar, then said to him, within hearing of her lord, such great shame that never was greater said to any man: "Falsely pious one, false hypocrite...such men deceive everyone who on the outside seem good but inside are totally rotten...You forbid dances and carols, viols, drums and zithers, and all delights of minstrels, to young people. Now tell me, sir high king, did St. Francis lead such a life?"

232 Chiffoleau 233-234, 236; Gonthier 243; R. Grand, "Justice criminelle, procédure et peines dans les villes aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles," Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes 102 (1941): 98; Rodrigue Lavoie, "Justice, morale et sexualité à Manosque (1240-1430)," Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du moyen âge. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. Michel Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, Service des Publications, 1987) 11-12.

la coille enpoignie/ Et vet fuiant aval la rue... " (ll. 437-438: "The priest covered his testicles with his hand and went fleeing down the street"). In (91) Le Prestre et Alison, the *conteur* comments at some length on the sight of the naked priest fleeing before his tormentors:

> Devers le cul sanble bouquet,
> Por ce qu'il n'avoit riens vestu.
> Cil de la vile l'ont veü
> Que il estoit nuz com uns dains.
> Certes, n'eüst pas en desdaig
> Un poi de robe sor ses os! (ll. 426-431)
>
> From behind his ass resembles a he-goat, for he had not put anything on. Those of the village saw him, for he was naked as a buck. Certainly, he would not have disdained a little cloth on his bones!

Having one's wife exposed naked to the eyes of others is presented in the fabliaux as a very humiliating experience. The three men in (2) Constant du Hamel who witness the peasant Constant rape each of their wives in succession appear to feel shame primarily because, as each sees his wife ravished, the other two can look on her nakedness as well. Each is indeed mocked for this by the other two, who say such things as, "Don't you recognize that behind?"[233] "Do you recognize that woman there?"[234] and "She has a behind blacker than a crow's."[235] An even more

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233

> "Prestre, qu'est ce que ge voi la?
> Or esgardez que ce sera,
> Se ce puet estre la prestresse.
> Connoistras la tu a la fesse,
> Et as naches qui sont entor?" (ll. 696-700)
>
> "Priest, what is this that I see there? Now look at what this will be, if this may be the priest's wife. Will you know her by her ass and by the cheeks which are around it?"

234

> "Or en voi une a grant destroit!
> Prevoz, connois tu cele la?
> Ge cuit qu'ele tunbera ja." (ll. 729-731)
>
> "Now I see one in a bind! Provost, do you know that woman there? I think that she will soon be turned over."

235

> "Esgarde, forestier, esgarde!
> Fait li prevoz, "Ce que puet estre?
> -"Par les sainz Dieu!" ce dit le prestre,
> "Cest mireor est assez orbe:
> Ele a le cul plus noir que corbe." (ll. 759-763)
>
> "Look, forester, look!" says the provost, "What can this be?" -"By God's saints," says the priest, "This mirror is very dim! She has an ass blacker than a crow's!"

telling instance in which the exposure of one's wife to the eyes of others gives rise to shame occurs in (122) Les trois Dames de Paris. After a night of drinking and carousing, three women end up lying naked in the streets of Paris, covered with mud and seemingly dead to judge from their appearance. A crowd gathers around them and a neighbor of the three women notifies their husbands. The men quickly arrive on the scene, but they seem to be far more upset about their wives' naked bodies being exposed to public view than they are by the fact that the women are apparently dead:

> [Il] pasmerent de duel et d'ire
> Quant il ont leur fames trouvees
> Gisant nues et desrobees,
> Comme merdes en mi la voie:
> N'est hons, s'il veult, qui ne les voie
> Par tout, et en coste et en mi. ... (ll. 206-211)
> Ainssi qu'il vindrent la corant,
> Leur trois fames ont reconutes... (ll. 214-215)
> Gisans nues a tel disfame:
> Les cuers de courouz leur enflame
> Car cus et tettes leur paroit. (ll. 217-219)

They fainted from sorrow and anger when they found their wives lying naked and unclothed, like turds in the middle of the road: there is no man, if he wants, who does not see them completely, along the sides and in the middle. ...Thus they came running there, their three wives they recognized...lying nude in such infamy: their hearts inflame with anger, for their behinds and heads were visible.

Clearly the status of the husband declines if others view the wife naked. The implication is that he is a cuckold. Indeed, in several fabliaux the wife sleeps with a lover in the husband's presence, the husband having been soundly duped so that, as in (98) Le Prestre qui abevete, he believes that what he sees is not actually happening or, as in (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel and (95) Le Prestre et la Dame, he as been rendered drunk or deprived of the use of his senses so that he is not entirely aware of what is happening. On one level, the husband's presence at his own cuckolding may be understood as a straightforward indication of the boldness and temerity of his wife and her lover. On a more symbolic level, his presence may also be understood as an indication that he has participated in his own cuckolding and hence deserves to be cuckolded.[236]

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[236]The fabliaux frequently show how the cuckold brings about his own cuckolding. In (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel (the third couple), (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame, and (93) Guillaume au Faucon, the husbands unwittingly give permission to their wives to

D. Mockery, Derision, and Insults

We saw above that several terms can denote insults. The expressions *dire vilenie* and *aviler* refer to insults given that are not warranted, and the expressions *dire honte*, *honir*, *laidengier* and *laidir de parole* are used to describe the act of saying to one's face what shameful thing a person has done. *Huer* and *huchier* can describe a crowd mocking someone. Other terms that describe insults or expressions that denote the act of mocking or making fun of another, including *gaber*, *ramposner*, *escharnir*, *moquier*, and *truffer*, are used in the fabliaux to describe the act of verbally diminishing the status of another. All indicate the experience of shame.

The precise meaning of the various terms indicating mockery and insults is revealing in terms of the semantic network of shame. The verb *gaber* and the noun *gab* (*gas* in the *cas sujet*) have several senses: "to joke, kid or tease; to make fun of or mock;" and, according to Tobler-Lommatzsch, "to cheat or deceive."[237] All senses of the word are employed in the fabliaux. In the sense of "to joke, kid or tease," *gaber* is used to describe a form of teasing which entails saying something that is not true. It is different from mockery in that the element of shame is slight or non-existent. Characters at the worst are being teased for their credulity, but nothing more. For example, in (21) Les Perdris, the wife cries, "C'est gas, c'est gas!" (l. 63: "It's a joke! It's a joke!") when her husband becomes enraged upon being told that their cat stole the partridges he caught. Uttering this *gab*[238] does not diminish her husband's status and so should be understood as teasing, not mockery.[239]

Often *gaber* and *gab* are employed in situations in the fabliaux in which one character, unable to believe the veracity of what another says, accuses him or her of *gabant* or uttering *gab*.

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enter into illicit unions. In a few fabliaux unmarried men and women engage in intercourse in the sight of others. This is presented as shameful for the women but not for the men. In (20) Cele qui se fist foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari, for instance, a squire has intercourse with a widow grieving at her husband's grave while the knight whom the squire accompanies looks on. The knight nearly faints from laughter at the sight. In (114) La Gageuere a squire forces sexual intercourse upon a chambermaid within view of the squire's brother, a knight, and the chambermaid's cousin, the wife of the knight.

237 Godefroy and Tobler-Lommatzsch.

238 In fact the wife is not uttering a *gab*, but telling a patent lie. She has consumed the partridges herself.

239 See also (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre l. 118 D; (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine l. 70; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 270; (47) Les trois Boçus l. 170; (50) Les deus Chevaus ll. 67, 137; (74) Le Sacristain II ll. 190, 684; (124) Trubert l. 2630.

Hence the sergeants of the king in (13) Le Vilain Mire, doubtful that the peasant woman before them has a husband who is a doctor, ask her, "Dame, le dites vos gas?" (l. 147: "Lady, are you saying this as a joke?"). So too the lord's wife in (93) Guillaume au Faucon, when her husband's squire tells her he is in love with her, responds by asking him, "Is this a joke?"

> "Guillaumes," dist ele, "Est ce gas?
> Ge ne vos ameroie pas;
> Vos gaberoiz encor autrui!
> Onques mais gabee ne fui,
> Par mon chief, com vos m'avez ore!" (ll. 281-285)
>
> "William," she said, "Is this a joke? I would not love you; you would joke again with another! Never was I so joshed, by my head, like you have done to me now!"[240]

Again, the element of shame in these situations is slight.

Anthropologists debate whether mere joking can be distinguished from more hostile teasing.[241] Indeed, often it is difficult in the fabliaux to ascertain whether *gaber* indicates teasing or more serious mockery in which shame is intended. For example, in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, the knight thinks he is being *gabé* when he is told by one of three mysterious women bathing in a fountain that she is giving him the gift of being able to make any female's anus speak should the *pudenda* be unable to do so. While it is clear that *gaber* in this context describes saying something that is untrue, it is unclear whether mild teasing or more severe shame-inducing mockery should be understood.

> Donc ot li chevaliers vergoigne,
> Qui bien cuide que gabé l'aient
> Et que por noient le delaient. (ll. 238-240)
>
> Then the knight was embarrassed, well did he think they had mocked/joked with him, and that they had delayed him for nothing.

The knight experiences *vergoigne* at the fairy's gift. He experienced *honte* just prior when one of the other fairies gave him the gift of being able to make the pudenda speak, something which the knight also considers the result of having been *gabé*.[242] Such a reaction suggests that the knight

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240See also (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine ll. 70, 178; (83) La Dame escoillee l. 474; (91) Le Prestre et Alison l. 155; (124) Trubert ll. 723, 872, 2069.

241Apte 36.

242"Adonc ot li chevaliers honte" (l. 226: "Then the knight felt much shame"). In manuscript A, this offer is also referred to by the verb *gaber*: "...bien cuide que gabé l'aient..." (l. 223 A: "...[he] well thought that they had mocked him...").

in fact is being ridiculed. The words *honte* and *vergoigne* could, however, indicate the embarrassment that comes from having something sexual brought to the attention of a noble young knight, as is common in the Lancelot-Grail cycle.[243] In two manuscripts of (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons (D and I) the knight laughs about what the women have said when he recounts his misadventure to his squire. In this context, *gaber* more clearly indicates teasing and *honte* and *vergoigne* embarrassment.

> Trestot en riant li aconte
> Si com ave oi el conte:
> "Gabé m'ont celes dou prael." (ll. 243-245 D)
> Completely in laughing he told him [what happened] as you have heard in this story: "Those in the meadow have teased me."

There are several instances when *gaber* clearly indicates "to mock."[244] Sometimes it is used to describe when a character is mocked to his or her face, as for example in (5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse, when the neighbor Symon mocks Dame Anieuse after she has been soundly beaten by her husband in a physical match to see who should wear the breeches in the household: "'Anieuse, veus en tu plus?'/ Fet Symons, qui la va gabant" (ll. 334-335: "'Anieuse, do you want any more?' said Simon, who was mocking her"). Simon's words can only be understood as an attempt to rub Anieuse's nose in her defeat and so should be understood as appertaining to the experience of shame.[245] Often the context suggests that *gaber* entails an element of aggression and an attempt to diminish the status of another. In (50) Les deus Chevaus, for instance, a monk encountering a peasant on the road to Amiens insults his horse, asking, "Is this horse young or old? By appearances, it's not worth a lot." The peasant indignantly responds that he intends to sell the horse, and adds, "Si ne m'eüssiez pas gabé" (l. 67: "You shouldn't mock me about it"). The monk's response indicates how *gaber* should be understood: "Ainc ne le dis por vostre anui/ Ne por vous de riens agrever..." (ll. 70-71: I never said it to annoy you or aggrieve you in any way..."). In (2) Constant du Hamel the status-diminishing implications of *gaber* are clear. As was mentioned above, as each of the three lecherous husbands watch the peasant Constant ravish their wives, the other two mock him, saying such things as "Don't you recognize that behind?"

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[243]Robreau 175-176.

[244]In addition to the examples that follow, see also (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne l. 307; (59) Le Foteor l. 134; (124) Trubert ll. 713, 723.

[245]See also (2) Constant du Hamel l. 767; (7) Boivin de Provins l. 189 P; (46) La Coille noire l. 69; (74) Le Sacristain I l. 463; (120) Le Sentier battu ll. 6, 125; (124) Trubert l. 2404.

The third man to witness his wife's humiliation is somewhat relieved that the other two men are also now proven cuckolds, since none of them can then *gaber* the other: "Mais ce le fait reconforter/ Que l'un en pot l'autre gaber" (ll. 766-767: "But this comforts him, that one could not mock the other"). All are now reduced to the same low level.

In some instances *gaber* is used to describe when characters are ridiculed and talked about in their absence by people in general, as for example the husband in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, who believes his wife's outrageous denial of infidelity even in the face of incontrovertible proof to the contrary, with the result that "Granz risees et granz gabois/ En firent en Beseïnois!" (ll. 285-286: Much laughter and jesting was made about him in the Bessin region!"). The verb *gaber* describes the talk that circulates concerning the father in (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre whose daughter's sensitivity to swearing prevents him from hiring any help:

> Cil qui sauoient son couine
> Se gaboient communement
> Et trestuit li'autre ensement... (ll. 36-38 D)
>
> Those who knew his state all mocked him together, and all the others in the same way...[246]

When it indicates "to mock," *gaber* is most commonly paired with *rire* or *risée*.[247]

Gaber can also indicate "to deceive." This sense is illustrated in (35) Gombert et les deus Clers, in which the peasant Gombert uses the expression "gabez et deceüz" to describe how he has been tricked by the two clerics, one of whom has slept with his daughter:

> A tant sire Gonbert s'esveille,
> Si s'est tantost aperceüz
> Qu'il est gabez et deceüz
> Par les clers et par lor engiens. (ll. 146-149)
>
> At that Sir Gombert awoke, and at once he saw that he was tricked and deceived by the clerics and their cunning.

So too the peasant in (98) Le Prestre qui abvete is said to be "gabés/ Et decheüs et encantés" (ll. 79-80) by the priest who makes the peasant doubt the evidence of his own eyes when he sees the

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[246]See also (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 285-286; (124) Trubert l. 396. In (38) Estula, laughing and joking are shared by the two brothers, not by unspecified people in general: "ont gabé et ris" (l. 134: "they laughed and joked").

[247]See for example (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 285-286; (38) Estula l. 134; (46) La Coille noire l. 67; (124) Trubert ll. 2400, 2404.

priest sleep with his wife.[248]

The many possible meanings of *gaber* allow for an ingenious double-entendre in (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier. A woman who, unbeknownst to her husband, has her lover in bed, seems to be teasing her husband (and is intentionally giving her lover a fright) when she tells her husband that there is an entity in the room that has recently been between her legs more often than her husband, who has just returned home from a trip. Her husband angrily draws his sword, at which she leaps out of bed and straddles the threshold, urging him to strike it. The threshold is the mysterious entity which has recently been between her legs more often than her husband. The next lines make use of several of the senses of the word *gaber*: "Li sire en a ris et gabé,/ Puis dist: 'Bien me savez gaber!'" (ll. 199-200: "Her husband laughed and joked, then said, 'Well do you know how to *gaber* me!'"). The husband means, by the latter *gaber*, "well do you know how to joke with me," but the audience knows it should also be understood as, "well do you know how to deceive me!".[249]

The verb *rampsoner* and the noun *ramposne* indicate "to insult," "to reprimand," or "to mock."[250] In the fabliaux, the words are paired most often with *laidengier*[251] and also occur with

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248See also (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre l. 118 D; (43) La Male Honte I l. 144; (65) La Pucele qui voloit voler l. 85; (74) Le Sacristain III l. 467; (124) Trubert ll. 2585, 2590, 2593.

249A similar double-entendre occurs in (124) Trubert, in which Trubert, disguised as his own sister and calling himself "Coillebaude," becomes the constant companion of Rosete, the duke's daughter, even sharing her bed. When she becomes pregnant, he tells the duchess that she is visited by an angel each night. The humor of the exchange between Trubert and the duchess derives from the double sense of *gaber*:

-"Damoisele, vos me gabez!"
-"Dame, dit vos ai verité;
Encore anuit i a esté."
-"Damoisele," dit la duchoise,
"Vos n'estes mie bien cortoise
Qui me gabez! Vos avez tort!"
Coillebaude jure la mort
Et quanque de Dieu puet jurer
Qu'elle n'a cure de gaber...(ll. 2585-2593)

-"Young lady, you're kidding/tricking!" -"My lady, I have told you the truth; he was there again last night." -"Young lady," said the duchess, "You are not at all *courtoise*, who tricks/mocks me! You are wrong!" Coillebaude swore on God's death and whatever else of God's that she could swear on that she had no desire to kid/trick...

In fact, Coillebaude's only desire is to trick the duke and his family.

250Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

eschars[252] and *dire vilenie*.[253] They are used in the fabliaux only to describe one-on-one insults or mocking comments, situations in which one character insults another to his or her face. They appear to denote grave insults. In (120) Le Sentier battu, for instance, after the lady intimates that the knight is a poor worker in the craft of love, the *conteur* comments on the gravity of the *ramposne*:

> Car il n'est femme terriienne
> Qui ja peüst un homme amer,
> Mes qu'ele l'oïst diffamer
> D'estre mauvés ouvrier en lit
> De fere l'amoureus delit:
> Et sus ce point fu ramposnez. ...
> ...Le chevalier, qui bien savoit
> Que le cri de tel chose avoit,
> Pour la ramposne ot cuer dolent,
> Si ot do soi vengier talent. (ll. 98-103, 111-114)

For there is no woman on earth who would ever be able to love a man if she had heard him defamed as a poor worker in bed, in doing amorous pleasure: and on this point he was insulted. ... The knight, who well knew what the rumor of such a thing meant, on account of the insult had a sorrowful heart, and so had a desire to avenge himself.

Similarly in (77) Connebert *ramposne* describes a crude and vicious insult which the valet hurls at the lecherous priest after he has been forced to castrate himself:

> Et li vallez, qui fu au prone,
> Li a gietiee une ranpone:
> "Sire, ma dame vos esgarde;
> Ses cus n'a de voz coilles garde:
> Vos li avez treves donees!
> Or sont remeses les pognees:
> Vos ne batroiz ja mais crepon,
> Ainz manroiz vie de chapon!"
> Li prestes ne sona un mot
> De ce que cil lo laidanjot... (ll. 278-287)

And the valet, who was at the door of the clerestory, hurled an insult at him: "Sir, my lady sees you; her ass does not have to be on guard against your balls: you have made a truce with it! Now

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251(77) Connebert ll. 279, 287; (120) Le Sentier battu l. 9.

252(52) Le Vilain au Buffet ll. 200-201.

253(82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier ll. 21-24.

> the bravado is finished: you will never again beat an ass, but rather will live the life of a gelded rooster!" The priest did not say a word about what he was insulting him about...

The silence with which the priest meets this insult is also an indicator of the severity of the insult, as will be discussed later in Chapter Three.[254]

According to the various Old French dictionaries, the verb *escharnir* has two basic senses: "to mock, deride, insult" and "to outrage, to shame."[255] Mockery is plainly indicated by *eschars* in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, in which the peasant tells the count how the seneschal verbally attacked him: "Ses vilains mos et ses eschars/ Me dist et mont me ranposna" (ll. 200-201: He said many villainous words and mocking things to me, and greatly insulted me"). In (124) Trubert, *escharnir* is coupled with *gaber* to describe what the king thinks is his wife's attempt to mock him. Trubert, disguised as the king, has slept with the duke's wife fourteen times in one night. When the duke's wife hears a knock at the door yet again, she says, "It's fourteen times now, make sure the fifteenth time doesn't end in failure, for you should leave it at an odd number. I don't know what you drank to make yourself so stiff and strong." The person knocking, this time the true duke, thinks his wife is mocking him for the infrequency with which they have sexual relations. He tells her,

> Dame, dame, or molt est trop gros!
> Bien savez geter vos seuros
> Por moi escharnir et gaber... (ll. 711-713)
> Lady, lady, now you have gone too far! You know well how to hurl jests, in order to mock and make fun of me...

When he leaves her, "Il jure la langue et les denz/ Que por neant l'a escharni..." (ll. 730-731: "He swore on the tongue and the teeth that she had mocked him for nothing...).[256]

In the sense of "to outrage, to shame," *escharnir* in the fabliaux is applied to outrageous

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254See also (52) Le Vilain au Buffet l. 201; (59) Le Foteor l. 274; (60) Le Chapelain l. 160; (76) La Plantez l. 45; (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier ll. 24, 32; (83) La Dame escoillee l. 572; (108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit pour Morele sa Provende avoir l. 164.

255Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

256See also (119) Le Clerc qui fu repus derriere l'Escrin l. 114. In (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne, the tavernkeeper uses the words *escharnir* (l. 186) and *trufer* (l. 174) when he reacts to what he thinks is mockery. The three blind men whom he has fed keep asking one another who has the money to pay the bill. As it turns out, none do. The tavernkeeper thinks he is being mocked by them. An element of deception may also present in this use of *escharnir*. The words *escharnir* and *gaber* are used later by the tavernkeeper to describe the priest's repeated insistence that the tavernkeeper is crazy (ll. 286, 307).

acts of theft, deceit and cuckolding, all of which bring shame to their victims. In (6) Barat et Haimet, *escharnir* is used twice to describe audacious acts of theft. In the first instance, the thief Barat steals the breaches from off his fellow thief Haimet while Haimet is attempting to prove his worth as a thief by stealing the eggs from a magpie's nest. The detailed description of Haimet's nakedness suggests he is thereby shamed.

Et cil si li anble du cul
Ses braies, si l'a escharni... (ll. 60-61)
Mais des braies nules ne vit,
Ainz vit ses coilles et son vit,
Tot descovert et nu a nu! (ll. 85-87)

And he stole his breeches from his ass, and so did outrage to him...
But no one [there] saw his breeches, but rather saw his balls and
his prick, all uncovered and completely naked!

In the second instance, the thief Travers steals back a ham from the two brothers Barat and Haimet by pretending to be the ghost of their dead father. The context in which *escharnir* appears shows that the brothers are thereby shamed for their cowardice and for allowing themselves to be tricked and robbed.

Bien set Travers l'a escharni,
Qui du bacon l'a desgarni.
"Certes," fait il, "Par malvés cuer
Avons gité no bacon puer,
Et Travers l'a par son barnaige!
Bien en doit faire son carnaige;
Ne quide mais que il le perde.
Bien nos porroit tenir por merde,
S'ainsi li laissomes ravoir. (ll. 449-457)

Well did Travers know how to do outrage to him, who deprived
him of his ham. "Certainly," he said, "On account of a weak heart
have we thrown our ham out, and Travers has it through his act of
courage! Well can he make his feast with it; he does not think to
ever lose it. Well could he consider us shit, if we let him have it
thus.

Escharnir is used to describe the cuckolding of the duke in (124) Trubert, in which the duchess sleeps with Trubert in exchange for Trubert's multi-colored goat. Such a commercial transaction for a woman of such high status would be deemed outrageous and certainly serve to diminish the status of the duke:

Bien cuide et croit veraiement
Que ses sires sache comment
Trubert l'avoit si escharnie. (ll. 355-357)

Well did she think and truly believe that her lord knew how
Trubert had done outrage to him.

The verb *trufer* is similar to *gaber* in that it can indicate both "to mock" and "to deceive."[257] Shame is always the result for the victim. The word occurs infrequently in the fabliaux. Both senses of the term are conveyed in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre, in which the dying priest, annoyed at the friars' aggressive attempt to garner a large bequest, plans to take vengeance and *trufer* them: "Et pense qu'il s'en vengera,/ S'ilh puet, et qu'il les trufera" (ll. 132-133: "And he thought that he would take vengeance, if he is able, and that he would *trufer* them"). He exacts his vengeance by promising to leave to them that thing which has been most precious to him during his life. He instructs them to return with the town elders for the presentation of the bequest. When all are assembled, he reveals that the legacy is his bladder. The friars are thus deceived and, by virtue of the presence of the city officials, mocked for their greed.[258]

The words *moquier* and *moquerie* occur infrequently in the fabliaux. *Moquier* can denote "to make faces at," as in (7) Boivin de Provins (l. 211), or "to mock,"[259] as in (120) Le Sentier battu in which the *conteur*, also using the words *ramposner* and *laidengier*, comments on the folly of insulting others:

Cui on ramposne ou on ledenge,
Quant il en voit lieu, il s'en venge.
Et tel d'autrui moquier s'atourne
Que sus lui meïsme retourne. (ll. 9-12)

257Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

258In (102) Le Prestre comporté, *trufer* is used by the tavernkeeper when he accuses the thieves of trying to trick him:

Bien voi que vous alés trufant!
Bien me cuidiés tres jone enfant,
Qui ensi me cuidiés truffer! (ll. 626-628)
Trop me cuidiés mal ensaignié... (l. 641)
Trop me cuidiés or fol prouvé! (l. 654)

Well do I see that you are going along deceiving me! You well think I'm a very young child, who think to deceive me thus! ...Too much do you think I was badly brought up... Too much do you think I'm a proven fool now!

The comparisons to a young child, someone badly brought up, and a proven fool, all persons of little worth, indicate the experience of shame. A similar use of *trufer* occurs in (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne, in which the tavernkeeper thinks the three blind men "me truffe" (l. 174) when they keep asking one another for the money to settle their bill.

259Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

He whom one mocks or one insults, when he sees the opportunity
he will avenge himself. And one who turns himself to mocking
another [has it] return on himself.

In (7) Boivin de Provins, *moquerie* describes a tale of the trickster being tricked, a story which the provost enjoys so much that he makes the teller stay with him for three days. The result is that the trickster Mabile is mocked (*moquée*) by everyone:

Si le fist .III. jours seiorner
Pour la moquerie conter... (ll. 328-329 P)
Et Mabile si fu moustree
Et par Prouvins de tous moquee... (ll. 331-332 P)

And he made him stay three days to tell the tale of deception ...
And Mabile was shown to be thus and was mocked in Provins by
everyone...

In this latter usage, *moquier*, like *gaber*, refers to a person being subject to public ridicule even when they are not present.

Like *gaber* and *trufer*, the word *desjogler* can indicate "to make fun of, mock" and "to abuse, dupe, trick".[260] The word occurs only once in the fabliaux, in (51) Les deus Changeors, in which a woman, in revenge for being frightened and humiliated by her lover, invites her lover to her house for a tryst and then sends for her husband. When her husband enters, the lover and the wife are in the bath. The lover cowers and hides behind the wife and she makes fun of him for being a coward:

-"Comment, vassaus," ce dist la dame,
"Estes vous de si biau comfort?
Je vous voi bel et grant et fort,
Si vous desfendez comme preus!
Je cuit bien que c'est vostre preus
S'a desfendre vous afichiez
Ou derriere moi vous fichiez,
Se vous cuidiez estre sorpris." (ll. 180-187)

"What, vassal," said the lady, "Do you have such wondrous
courage? I see you are beautiful and big and strong, so you defend
yourself like a *preudhomme*! I well think that it's to your
advantage, if you fix on defending yourself; or if you plant
yourself behind me if you think you'll be taken."

When the lover begs her not to reveal his presence, she turns her backside to him so that his face is buried in her buttocks. The *conteur* then comments on the lady's revenge, using the word

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260Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

desjogler: "Onques nus hom a mon avis/ Ne fu mes aussi desjoglez... (ll. 240-241: "Never was a man, in my opinion, *desjoglez* in such a way..."). Tricked by his lover into getting into a situation that proves him to be a coward and subsequently mocked by her, *desjogler* indicates both "to dupe" and "to mock."

In some instances in the fabliaux characters are mocked but no words specifically indicating mockery are used. So long as there is a verbal assault on another person's status, the experience of shame is still indicated. In (14) Aloul, for instance, the cowherd Berengier tells his companions that a ham in the threshing barn fell on him in the dark and he needs help in hanging it up. The cowherds return to the threshing barn with him, torches in hand, and find that all the hams are in place. He is mocked for being afraid of nothing:

> Lors commencierent tuit a rire.
> Li un dient que Berengier
> N'osa le bacon aprochier,
> Li autres dist que bien puet estre
> Que il avoit paor du prestre:
> Por ce fu il si esfraez. (ll. 846-851)
>
> Then they all began to laugh. Some said that Berengier did not dare to approach a ham, another said that it could easily be that Berengier was afraid of the priest: for this reason he was so afraid.

The laughter and the implication that there is a large gap between how Berengier should behave and how he in fact does behave point to the experience of shame. Similarly in (115) Les Braies le Priestre, when the butcher discovers in his breeches not the money he requires for a purchase but the priest's seal, he is subjected to mockery by those around him who realize he is a cuckold.

> Entour lui ot mout grant risee.
> Li bouciers fu tous entrepris
> Et de grant mautalent espris
> Quant le saiel au priestre troeve:
> Or peut veïr apierte preuve
> Que li priestres fu de li priés.
> Uns siens compains li dist apriés:
> "Compains, c'as tu fait de tes braies?
> Or as tu ensengnes bien vraies
> Dou priestre dont le saiel as:
> De ta femme fait ses soulas,
> Et si ert dou tien parçonniers,
> Qu'il a te bourse a tes deniers!"
> Li bouciers fut plus abaubis
> Qu'entre dis leus une brebis.
> Et cascuns di: "Vois dou huihot!"
> La bieste de quoi paiier n'ot:

Trestous desconfis en revint. (ll. 88-105)

Around him there was much laughter. The butcher was completely surprised, and burned with great anger when he found the priest's seal: now he can see open proof that the priest was near him. One of his companions then said: "Companion, what have you done with your breeches? Now do you truly have the signs of the priest whose seal you have: he takes solace in your wife, and so has been sharing in what is yours, for he has your purse with your money!" The butcher was more bewildered than a sheep among ten wolves. And each one said: "Behold the cuckold!" He did not have the means to pay for the animal: completely broken, he left.

Even in the absence of words specifically indicating mockery or shame, it is clear that the butcher is being mocked and his status is much diminished.[261]

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Figure 2.4 illustrates the semantic network that can be drawn for words indicating mockery, derision and insults. A connection with words indicating "to shame" is not shown, as all of these terms were linked to shaming. What is of special interest in this diagram is the link between mockery and deception. The words *gaber*, *trufer*, and *desjogler* all indicate both "to mock" and "to trick or deceive," and in some instances both senses are intended when these words are used.

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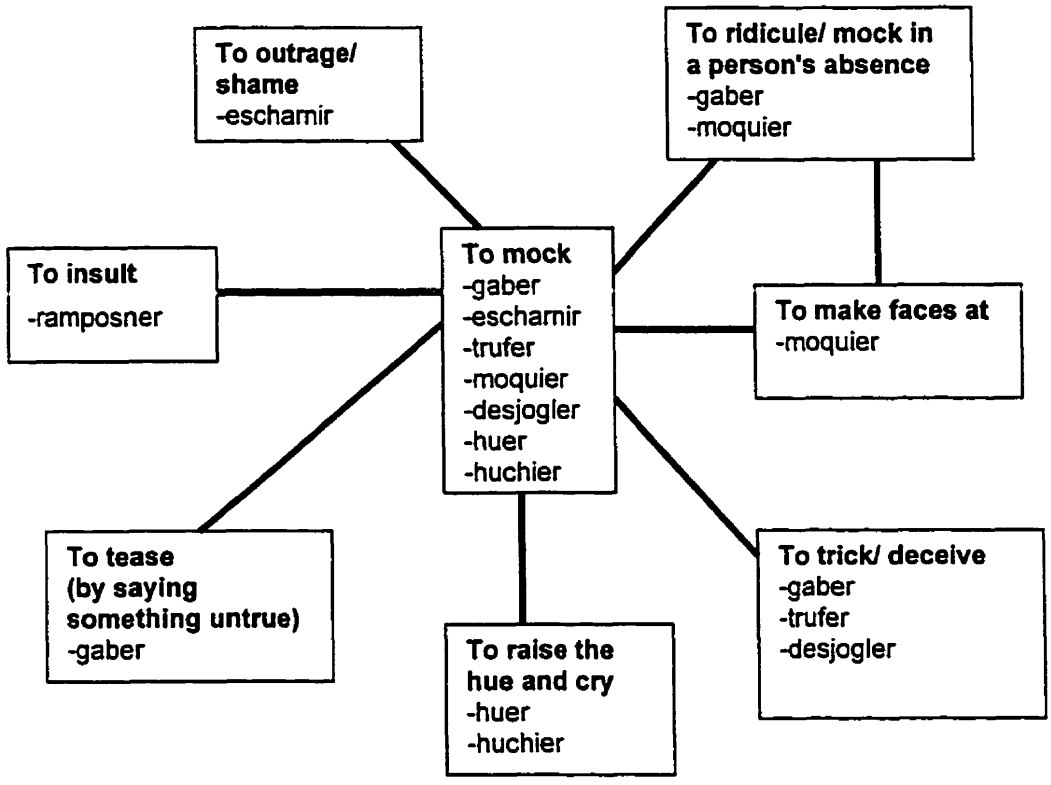
261 In (45) Le Prestre et les deus Ribaus, the priest mocks the two scoundrels who sought to rob him of his horse by using weighted dice:

Puis lor escrie a haute vois:
"A Dieu, seignor, quar je m'en vois!
Li chevaus n'ert hui mes voz ostes,
Quar tost eüst maigre les costes
S'il fust auques en vo baillie;
Sa provende li fust baillie
Plus sovent de cops que d'avaine,
Quar sovent feïst le trivaine!" (ll. 267-274)

Then he said to them in a loud voice: "Adieu, lords, for I am going! The horse will not be your guest again, for it would have soon had thin sides if it were in your keeping; he would have been sustained more often with blows than with oats, for often you would have made him undergo a three-day fast!"

As scoundrels, the two men's status is already low. However, in that they sought to trick the priest and he has tricked them in turn, their status can be viewed as diminished.

Figure 2.4: The Semantic Network of Terms Indicating Mockery, Derision, and Insults



E. Laughter

As noted above in the section concerning mockery, laughter is often associated with the experience of shame. The verb *rire* and the nouns *ris* and *risée* are used to indicate laughter in the fabliaux. The word *risée* could indicate either laugher or mockery.[262] When it indicates mockery, the experience of shame can be understood. It clearly indicates mockery in (66) La Sorisete des Etopes, in which the husband, fearful that he will be mocked unless he capture his wife's *con*, addresses the *con* with the words: "Faites en sera mout grant risée,/ S'an set qu'eschapez me soiez!" (ll. 136-137: "People will mock me about it if they know you escaped from me").[263] In other cases it is unclear whether mockery or laughter is intended by *risée*. In

262Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch also gives "joke, merry story" as one of the meanings of the term.

263See also (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 285.

(115) Les Braies le Priestre, as we have just seen, there is much *risée* around the butcher at the market when he discovers certain proof that his wife is cuckolding him: "Entour lui ot mout grant risee" (l. 88: "There was much laughter/mockery around him"). Similarly in (37) La vieille Truande the *conteur* notes, "Si fu des gens grans la risee" (l. 219: "There was much laughter/mockery among the people") when the old beggar woman forces the proud young squire to admit she is his mother. Likewise in (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre I the *conteur* observes that "Mout en fu grande la risee" (l. 30: "there was much laughter/mockery") when the young man, pretending to have the same affliction as the prudish young girl, faints dead away upon hearing the word "foutre."[264]

When characters are laughed at and mocked in a context that suggests a diminution of their status, the experience of shame can be understood. Hence in (124) Trubert when Aude and the other young maidens at the court laugh at hearing the obscene name of Trubert's sister (who is in fact Trubert in disguise), the sister immediately responds by accusing them of attempting to *gaber* her:

> Quant Aude l'ot, si en a ris
> Et toutes les autres ausis.
> "Comment? Comment? Dites encor!"
> -"Par foi, je nel dirai plus or:
> Je voi bien que vos me gabez!" (ll. 2400-2404)

> When Aude hears it [the name] she laughs, and all the others as well. "What? What? Say it again!" --"By my faith, I will not say it anymore: I can well see that you are mocking me."[265]

As noted above, *gab* and *gaber* are most frequently paired with words of the *rire* family.[266]

Most often, laughter is associated with trickery. When one person tricks another or through his or her own vices is tricked, others laugh at the trick. The reason for the laughter in such situations clearly is partially cognitive, as is true for much humor,[267] but the laughter also serves to shame the tricked individual. In (120) Le Sentier battu, for instance, the noble company laughs at the proud young woman when the knight whom she had previously insulted

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264See also (116) Le Pliçon l. 76.

265Similarly in (14) Aloul, as we have just seen, the cowherds all laugh at their companion Berengier when they discover what they think is proof that he is a coward. They then proceed to mock him (ll. 846-851). See also (115) Les Braies le Priestre l. 88 and (120) Le Sentier battu l. 86.

266See also (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 285; (46) La Coille noire l. 69.

267Cf. Apte 130.

cleverly tricks her into revealing her lascivious ways to all (ll. 80-83). In (127) Le Vescie a Prestre, the town officials laugh at the friars when the dying priest, whom the friars had hounded for a bequest, reveals that the "most precious thing" which he is leaving to them is his bladder (l. 311). The shameful nature of the laughter that follows on a trick is most explicit in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, in which a stingy seneschal officiating at his lord's feast approaches an unwashed peasant entering the hall and offers to give him a *buffet*, which could mean either "chest" or "blow". Understanding the seneschal's words as an invitation to sit down and share in the repast, the peasant agrees to take the *buffet*, upon which the seneschal, playing on the double meaning of the word, gives the poor peasant a blow. The peasant later has his revenge when he strikes the seneschal in the sight of all the company. When asked to explain why, he states that he is only returning the *buffet* which the seneschal had given him earlier, upon which everyone laughs. Their laughter is engendered in part by the clever way in which the peasant, like the seneschal, has played on the dual meaning of the word and thereby turned the tables on the seneschal. However, the laughter is also presented as extremely humiliating for the seneschal:

> Adonc fu grande la risee,
> Qui a piese ne fu passee.
> Li seneschaus ne set que face,
> Qui sa main tenoit a sa face
> Qui durement li frist et cuit.
> Ce qu'il les voit rire li nuit... (ll. 225-230)

> Then there was much laughter, which did not end quickly. The seneschal did not know what to do. He held his hand to his face, which was cruelly burning and scalding. That he saw them laughing at him annoyed him.[268]

When laughter accompanies a clever trick, the *conteur* often elaborates on the extent of the

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[268]For other examples of laughter in situations in which characters are either tricked or through their own actions end up tricking themselves, see (7) Boivin de Provins l. 376; l. 157 P; (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne l. 179; (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons ll. 604-605; (17) Les Braies au Cordelier l. 332; (20) Cele qui se fist foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari l. 101; (29) Le Vallet aus douze Fames l. 135 (in which all laugh both at the clever punishment the valet has devised, and the way in which his proposal shows that he had deceived himself in thinking he could handle twelve wives; (30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue I l. 86; (38) Estula l. 134; (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force l. 165; (46) La Coille noire ll. 69-70, 108; (68) L'Evesque qui beneï le Con l. 218; (74) Le Sacristain II l. 174 (the husband's laughter is prompted by the realization that his wife has not cuckolded him); (76) La Plantez ll. 127, 131; (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 199; (91) Le Prestre et Alison ll. 146, 376; (97) Le povre Mercier l. 101; (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux l. 355; (114) La Gageure l. 89; (117) La Nonete l. 154-155.

laughter. It is described as "grant risee,"[269] or "grant ris"[270]; characters laugh "forment"[271] or everyone present is said to laugh.[272] Characters are described as clapping their hands when they laugh,[273] splitting their sides with laughter,[274] or falling to the ground in a faint on account of the laughter.[275] In (97) Le povre Mercier the *conteur* devotes almost three lines to describing the laughter of the lord and his court when they hear the merchant's clever case against the monk:

> ...Que veïst rire
> Le seignor et sa conpaignie,
> De rire ne se teignest mie. (ll. 222-224)
>
> He who would have seen the lord and his company laugh would not be able to refrain from laughter.[276]

The laughter that accompanies mockery or trickery is not always harsh. In some instances it appears to indicate a mild form of chiding or teasing. In (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, for instance, the wife laughs at the exhausted cleric when he is no longer able to perform for her sexually. The mockery in her laughter is obviously very mild, however, if indeed it should be understood as mockery at all, for the cleric has already had intercourse with

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269(120) Le Sentier battu l. 81

270(110) Le Meunier d'Arleux l. 355.

271(15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 604.

272(15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 605; (46) La Coille noire l. 108.

273(76) La Plantez l. 127.

274(117) La Nonete ll. 154-155.

275(9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne l. 179; (20) Cele qui se fist foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari l. 101; (127) Le Vescie a Prestre l. 311.

276The laughter of the wife in (54) La Dame qui fist trois Tors entor le Moustier is likely best understood in the context of trickery. Her lover the priest is alarmed when, during a rendez-vous in the woods, they see her husband looking for her. Her husband is plainly aware of the fact that she has lied to him as to her where-abouts and the priest tells her he fears she will be beaten. She laughs and tells him to worry about himself:

> -"Onques de moi ne vos soveingne,
> Dan prestres, de vos vos couveingne!"
> Dit la damoizele en riant. (ll. 115-117)
>
> "Never think about me, sir priest, you must think about yourself," said the woman in laughing.

She subsequently cleverly tricks her husband so that he is assured of her fidelity. Her laughter here is likely a sign of her control over the situation and confidence in her ability to trick her husband.

her five times that night.

> La dame li dist en riant:
> "Ore en pernez tant com voudret,
> Kar ja mes plus n'i avendret."
> Que volez vus, il ne pout plus! (ll. 508-511)
>
> The lady said to him, laughing: "Now take as much as you would like, for it will never happen again." What do you want? He could not do it anymore!

The two Englishmen in (90) Les deus Angloys et l'Anel are laughed at for their poor French and the misunderstandings that result (ll. 53, 112), and the wife in (116) Le Pliçon laughs when she throws her petticoat around her husband's head, telling him that is what she would do if he caught her in bed with a lover (which in fact is what he has unknowingly done): "La dame le bourgois acolle/ Et en riant fort le rigolle" (ll. 91-92: The lady embraced the bourgeois and in laughing loudly mocked him"). The knight in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons laughs at himself when he recounts to his squire the obscene gift the three women in the fountain have made, taking it all as a light form of mockery:

> Quant a aconseü Huet,
> Trestot en riant li aconte
> Si com avez oï el conte:
> "Gabé m'ont celes du prael." (ll. 242-245)
>
> When he caught up to Hugh, completely in laughing he recounted to him [what happened], jus as you have heard in this story: "Those in the meadow have mocked me."

Of course some element of mockery and hence of shaming can still be understood in these fabliaux: the cleric in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk may be understood as being mocked for his impotence, the Englishmen in (90) Les deus Angloys et l'Anel for their poor command of the French language, the wife in (117) Le Plicon for his jealousy, and the knight in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons for his gullibility. Some anthropologists suggest that the only factor that distinguishes teasing from more serious mockery is whether an aggressive element is present, but this can be difficult to assess as teasing under a playful guise, like mockery, often serves the more serious purpose of persuading others to alter their behavior.[277]

That laughter can have an aggressive component is underscored by two fabliaux in which characters are described as laughing with (or without) anger. In one manuscript of (13) Le Vilain Mire, the husband laughs "par mautalant" when the king's sergeants call him a doctor. He may

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[277]Apte 36, 58-61, 144.

either be laughing at them for being so gullible as to believe a report that he is a doctor, or, more likely, he is attempting to shame them in return for having insulted him by calling him a doctor when it is so obvious that he is not. The context is not clear.

> Quant s'ot li uilains clamer mire
> Par mautalant conmence a rire
> Dit qu'il n'en set ne tant ne quant... (ll. 143-144 B)
>
> When the peasant heard himself called a doctor, he began to laugh out of anger, [and] said that he knew nothing [about being a doctor]...

In (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame, the lady is said to laugh "sanz ire" when she tells the knight who is pursuing her that she will not grant him her love until she knows how well he can carry shield and lance:

> Si li dist, en riant sanz ire,
> Que de s'amor n'ert il ja sire,
> Desi que sache san dotance
> Conmant il porte escu ne lance,
> Et s'il en set venir a chief. (ll. 21-25)
>
> And she told him, in laughing without anger, that he would never be master of her love until she knew without a doubt how he carried shield and lance, and whether he knew how to come through in the end.

There is obviously a double entendre in what she says to him; that she is speaking *sanz ire*, however, shows that her laughter should not be understood as mockery and status-diminishing, but is rather the laughter that accompanies teasing or talking about sex.

Characters in the fabliaux also laugh at three classes of people: fools or ignorant people, peasants, and cuckolds. In these sorts of situations no trickery is required to prompt laughter. The person need only do something to show they belong to these shame-worthy classes of people. The peasant doctor in (13) Le Vilain Mire is able to make the king's daughter laugh (and force out the fishbone which was caught in her throat) by taking his clothes off and scratching himself by the fire. The description of the scratching makes it clear that it is his peasant-like qualities which prompts the laughter:

> Et li vilein se despoilla
> -Onques ses braies n'i lessa-
> Si s'est delés le feu assis,
> Et s'est gratez et bien rostiz.
> Ongles ot lons et le cuir dur:
> Il n'a home jusqu'a Saumur,
> S'il fust gratez en itel point,
> Qu'il ne fust mout bien mis a point.

Et quant la pucele le voit,
A tot le grant mal qu'el avoit
Volt rire... (ll. 257-267)

The peasant took off his clothes - he did not even leave on his breeches - then he lay down by the fire, well did he scratch and roast himself. He had great nails and a hard hide, and know that between here and Saumux you would not find a man who, if he were scratched in this way, would not have been in better shape. And when the young girl saw him, despite her great malady she wanted to laugh...

The newly-wed wife laughs at her peasant husband Robbins in (10) Jouglet (l. 284) when he admits to her that he does not know how to engage in intercourse; she is laughing at his ignorance and his class, both of which are related. The king's men in (124) Trubert laugh at the multi-colored goat and the odd request made by Trubert, who is in all appearances a fool (ll. 230, 246). In (83) La Dame escoillee the count laughs when the lord of the castle in which he has sought shelter explains how his wife dominates him. To allow one's wife to dominate oneself was tantamount to being cuckolded. The count's advice to the knight makes it clear that he considers the knight of lesser status because his wife dominates him: "Li quens s'en rist et si li dist:/ "Se fussiez preuz, pas nel feïst" (ll. 103-104: "The count laughed and then said to him: 'If you were *preu*, then she would not do it").[278]

In a few instances characters laugh for joy, like the duke in (124) Trubert who laughs when he sees his hero (Trubert in disguise) return from battle, claiming to have vanquished his enemy, King Golias: "Li dus le voit, de joie en rit" (l. 1952: "The duke saw him, and laughed for joy").[279] Laughter is also frequently linked with sex. Many laugh when the knight in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les cons either describes or demonstrates his ability to make the *pudenda* of any female speak (ll. 309, 496). The wife in (59) Le Foteor laughs as she goes out to greet the man who has just told her maidservant that he is a fornicator for hire: "Cele, qui ot lou cuer volage,/ S'en vait tot riant cele part" (ll. 157-158: "She, who had a flighty heart, went in his direction, laughing"). In these instances, of course, there is no shame. In other instances,

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[278]The laughter of the count in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet is not prompted by a person of low status, but by an inability to do anything else about the seneschal's wickedness: "Ne s'en faisoit se rire non/ De la mauvaistié de celui..." (ll. 42-43: "He could only laugh at the wickedness of this one").

[279]See also (124) Trubert l. 898. This may also be interpreted as the laughter of a fool, or laughter in anticipation of the trick he is playing on the horse merchant.

however, there is an element of shame attached to speaking about sexual matters. Some *conteurs* announce that they are telling a fabliau that is designed to make people laugh. They beg to be excused for what they say, arguing that it is not *vilaine* to recount such stories and expressing a desire not to be blamed (*repris*) for it. The contexts suggest that it is recounting something concerning sex that will spark the laughter. In (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre III the *conteur* begins by announcing:

> Racounter uueil une auenture
> Par ioie et par enuoiseure
> Ele n'est pas uilaine a dire
> Mais moz por la gent faire rire. (ll. 1-4 D)
>
> I wish to tell a tale for joy and entertainment; it is not villainous to say it, but is [intended] to make people laugh.

He later says that the word *foutre* makes people laugh:

> Il n'est nus qui ne pragne some
> As ioenes genz ce est la some
> Et c'est a toz .i. mout doz mot
> El monde n'a sote ne sot
> Ne uielle de .iii.xx anz
> Qui ne soit durement ioianz
> Quant el en oit .i. sol mot dire
> Au meins l'en estuet il a rire. (ll. 25-32)
>
> There is no one who finds it burdensome, for young people it is everything, and it is to everyone a very sweet word. There is no idiot in the world, male or female, nor an old woman of 60 years, who is not very joyful when they hear one word spoken of it; at minimum they have to laugh.

The three canonesses in (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne similarly link laughter with a dirty tale and with something blameworthy. They ask the minstrel to tell them a story:

> "Ja n'en seras de nous repris.
> Ne voulons pas choses de pris,
> Mais ce qui mieus rire nous face!" (ll. 141-143)
>
> "You will never be blamed by us. We do not want an elevated story, but something which will make us laugh better!"[280]

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[280]See also the closing lines of the fabliau, in which Watriquet states that he asks for nothing but not to be blamed, as the tale is intended only to amuse:

> N'ai deservi que nus m'en chose.
> A moi ne s'en doit nus combatre:
> Ce sont risees pour esbatre
> Les roys, les princes et les contes. [ll. (254)-(257)]

Hence laughter is here associated not only with sexual matters, but also with something considered shameful. There seems to be two differing attitudes towards sexuality, then: characters within the fabliaux laugh about sexual matters, with no sense of shame evident, but *conteurs* in their prefaces to "dirty" fabliaux express an awareness that it is *vilain* to recount such matters. Charles Muscatine postulates the existence of two different ethics towards sexuality, both evident in the fabliaux: an "unselfconscious" attitude towards sexuality which resulted in "directness of diction" and the frequent use of (in the case of Old French) three-letter words; and a more puritanical attitude stemming from the evolution of courtly manners and mores, or what Muscatine terms "an outbreak of decency."[281] What Muscatine ignores, however, is that, even when words such as *vit* and *con* appear to be used in an unselfconscious manner by characters in the fabliaux, still hearing these words may have prompted laughter among the listeners. Certainly in other fabliaux, as we have seen, the obscene does prompt laughter. According to anthropologists, laughter is frequently evoked by the breaking of taboos.[282] That characters in some fabliaux laugh at the obscene while a taboo against direct speech and the obscene is evident in others does not necessarily mean that two different ethics were operating, then. A simpler explanation is that the obscenity and "directness of diction" were humorous precisely because they entailed the breaking of a taboo.

Since Joseph Bèdier first wrote about the fabliaux they have been defined as "contes à rire en vers."[283] In examining what it is that makes characters within the fabliaux laugh, one can extrapolate what it was that made the fabliaux amusing for their medieval audience as well. The same things which make characters laugh in the fabliaux in fact constitute common fabliau themes which likely were what made medieval audiences laugh. Just as characters in the fabliaux laugh when others are tricked, so we find that the deception of one character by another

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I do not merit a scolding from anyone. No one ought to quarrel with me:
these are amusing little tales to entertain kings, princes and counts.

281 Charles Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) ch. 5.

282 According to Apte, 171 ff, it is the taboos which haunt people the most which are most often broken in ritual humor.

283 Joseph Bèdier, Les fabliaux. Études de littérature populaire et d'histoire littéraire du moyen age, 4th ed. (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion, 1925) 30; Nykrog 14; Philippe Ménard, Les fabliaux: Contes à rire du moyen âge, Littératures modernes 32 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983) 33-35; Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux, ch. 1.

constitutes the plot line in the majority of the fabliaux.[284] The frequent concern with the obscene, with detailed description of genitalia and elaborate metaphors for love-making finds a parallel in the frequency with which characters in the fabliaux laugh about sexual matters. Just as characters in the fabliaux laugh when others are mocked, so different classes of people (especially stupid people, peasants and cuckolds) are frequently mocked in the fabliaux. Indeed, some works that are not considered fabliaux would in fact be deemed so if Joseph Bédier's definition and an appreciation for what sparked the medieval sense of humor were applied. The tale Les chevalier, les clers et les vilains, for instance, describes the reactions first of knights, then clerics, and finally of a group of peasants when they come upon a beautiful place in the woods. When the peasants come to the beautiful place, they decide to defecate there. The tale ends with the moral, "Vilain est qui fait vilanie."[285] While not particularly amusing from a modern point of view, such a tale would likely have been considered a "conte à rire" by a medieval audience who took pleasure in laughing at peasants. An appreciation for the medieval sense of humor also helps explain why a modern audience finds fabliaux such as (35) Gombert et les deus Clers and (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne not particularly amusing while these fabliaux in fact numbered among the "bestsellers," if the number of manuscripts in which a tale appeared are any indication of popularity.[286] The fabliau (35) Gombert et les deus Clers turns on the duping of a peasant, for no apparent reason other than that he is a peasant, and (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne concerns the tricking first of three blind beggars and then a tavernkeeper. Modern audiences find it distasteful that there is no reason for the peasant, the blind people or the tavernkeeper to be tricked; they have no moral failings that merit "poetic justice." To read the fabliaux in this manner is to judge them from the perspective of a guilt culture, however, and to ignore what things were considered humorous at the time.[287]

284Mary Jane Schenck in her book The Fabliaux identifies deception as the defining characteristic of what constitutes a fabliau.

285Barbazan, vol. 1, 45-47.

286Nykrog 324-325.

287Cf. Jürgen Beyer, "The Morality of the Amoral," The Humor of the Fabliaux: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Thomas D. Cooke and Benjamin L. Honeycutt (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974) 15-42. His analysis of the humor of the fabliaux clearly derives from a guilt culture perspective. He writes, "...whereas the ecclesiastical author could only fall prey to pessimism when confronted with the unchangeable corruption of woman and the unteachable, compulsive desires of man, the fabliaux suspend the Christian consciousness of sinfulness for a while in order to be able to laugh about a world constructed in such a fashion. ... [The fabliaux]

Viewing the fabliaux from the perspective of a shame culture may explain the humor not only of those fabliaux featuring fools, peasants, and cuckolds, but all fabliaux in which some sort of poetic justice appears to be at work. According to Thomas Cooke, character traits such as jealousy or lechery serve to prepare the audience for the comic climax of the fabliaux; when characters possessing these traits are cuckolded, castrated, caught, etc., the listener laughs because the *conteur* has carefully shaped the listener's expectations and the listener has the satisfaction of seeing "poetic justice" executed.[288] What Cooke fails to explain is why poetic justice is in itself humorous, however. Certainly morality plays, which also feature poetic justice, are not. When viewed from the perspective of a shame culture, though, these various character flaws are central to the humor of the fabliaux. Those who possess traits such as jealousy or lechery deserve to be shamed and the listener laughs at their shaming because when a shameful person is shamed, it is funny. When a husband who is jealous for no reason and who fails to treat his wife with due honor and respect is subsequently cuckolded, or when a lecherous priest is tricked and castrated, it was funny in the same way that tricking a fool or mocking a peasant was funny. In the worldview presented in the fabliaux, seeing and participating in the shaming of those who possess shameworthy traits was humorous. The humor of the fabliaux lies not so much in the preparation for the comic climax, but in the humor that comes when those who possess shameful qualities are tricked or shamed.

F. Being Slapped or Struck

As discussed above, numerous forms of physical chastisement are described by terms from the vocabulary of shame. *Honir* and *faire honte* are used to describe being beaten, castrated or killed and *avoir honte* is used to describe being beaten, maimed or castrated. These terms from the *honte* family are used only when the victim merits the punishment. *Faire lait* and *laidengier* are likewise used to describe beatings that are merited for some wrong done. Terms in the *vilenie* family are used to describe beatings when the person beaten is not guilty of any wrongdoing. In all these usages there is a sense that the person beaten, maimed or killed is shamed. In a few fabliaux, being struck once or slapped is similarly presented as shameful. In

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laugh about this world without ideals, because otherwise one could only weep" (pp. 41-42). See also Sydney E. Berger, "Sex in the Literature of the Middle Ages: The Fabliaux," Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1982) 162-175.

[288]Cooke.

(81) Le Prestre teint, the wife strikes on the forehead the priest who propositions her, causing him to flee "o tote sa honte" (l. 55). The *conteur* states that the priest is grieved not by the blow but by the lady's refusal, which would seem to indicate that the blow itself could be regarded as inherently shameful:

> De ce dont el fet doloir,
> Ne porce que l'avoit batu
> Tot ce ne prise un festu
> Que la dame el chief le feri.
> Molt a de ce le cuer mari
> Que de s'amour l'a refusé;
> En ce a mis tot son pensé. (ll. 62-67)[289]
>
> Because of this then she made him grieve, [but] not because she struck him; he did not care a straw that she had struck him on the head. He is much aggrieved in the heart about this, that she refused him her love; in this he puts all his thought.

Later in the same fabliau she strikes the priest's go-between, who is again described as being ashamed as a result:

> Hersent sans congié demander
> Est de la meson fors issue:
> De honte palist et tresue. (ll. 170-172)
>
> Hersent, without asking leave, left the house: she was pale and sweating from the shame.

That shame was inherent in being struck or slapped explains the exchanges between the seneschal and the peasant in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, described above. Although it is the laughter which is said to bother the seneschal, still there is the sense that the blow itself has imparted shame. The slap is the vehicle for shaming: the seneschal uses it to humiliate the peasant, and by giving it to the seneschal, the peasant is defending his affronted honor by causing shame to the seneschal in return.

G. Being Shaved or Shorn

In several fabliaux adulterous women are shorn (or almost shorn) of their hair. The adulterous wives in (54) La Dame qui fist trois Tors entor le Moustier and in (69) Les Tresces

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[289] I have adopted here the punctuation used by Charles H. Livingston in his edition, appearing in his Le jongleur Gautier le Leu. Etude sur les fabliaux, Harvard Studies in Romance Languages 24 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951) 255-269. The punctuation used by the editors of the NRCF leads to some inconsistency, making the text read: "He did not care a straw that she had beat him; he was much aggrieved in his heart that she struck him."

narrowly escape having their hair cut off by their angry husbands, and the woman who takes the place of the wife in (69) Les Tresces actually does lose her tresses. In version II of this fabliau it is made explicit that being shorn causes shame. The husband tells her that she will not soon recover from the *grant honte* of having lost her hair:

"Mais n'iert pas si tost trespassee
La grant honte que vos avroiz:
Ja si garder ne vos savroiz
De vos treces qu'avez perdues,
Deus anz les avroiz atendues,
Ainz que soient en lor bon point." (ll. 340-345)

"But the great shame you will have will not be so soon cured: you will not know how to attend so well to the tresses you have lost, you will wait two years before they are at their proper length!"

The wife herself has already told the woman who has stood in her place that she will arrange the cut tresses on her head in such a way that no one will notice their loss, further evidence of the shame they connote:

Ne ja douter ne li estuet
Des tresces - se trouver les puet -
Que si bien ne li mete el chief
Que ja n'en savra le meschief
N'ome ne feme qui la voie. (ll. 239-243)

She need not worry about her tresses - if she (the wife) can find them - for she will arrange them on her head so carefully that no man or woman who sees her will know of the misfortune.

For men as well having a shorn head was shameful. In (2) Constant du Hamel, the forester is said to prefer being shaved of his hair to being rejected by the woman he loves:

Qui li eüst la teste rese
Sanz eve a un coutel d'acier,
Ou fet les grenons erraschier,
Si l'en fust il assez plus bel! (ll. 131-134)

He who would have shaved his head without water and with an iron knife or had his mustache plucked would have done something much more pleasant to him [than the lady who rejected him].

Similarly the wife in (12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille, in a passage cites previously, tells her husband that she would rather that his head and neck be shaved without water than that he wear a coat made for someone else, as minstrels do:

"Bien doit estre chevaliers vis
Qui veut estre menestereus:
Mieus vodroie que eüsiez res

Sanz eve la teste et le col,
Que ja n'i remeinist chevol!
Ch'apartient a ces jugleours,
Et a ces bons vieleours,
Que il aient des chevaliers
Les robes, que c'est lor mestiers.
Ce n'apartient pas a vostre oés
D'avoir garnement s'il n'est nués. (ll. 207-217)

May he be a vile knight who wants to be a minstrel: I would prefer that you were shaved without water, your head and neck, so that no hair remained there! It is fitting for *jongleurs* and good music makers to have garments from knights, for that is their livelihood. It is not customary for you to have a garment if it is not new.

Men are always said to have their hair shaved (*raser*) rather than cut (*coper*). Although the pain in being shaved without water is clearly part of the unpleasant aspect of this operation, still an element of shame is likely present, for being shaved in both these fabliaux is said to be preferable to other shameful events: being rejected by one's beloved, and acting like a lowly minstrel by accepting a coat made for another. The shame for men in these situations likely derives not so much from being marked as a malefactor, as was the case for the adulterous women, but from being marked as a fool, for the insane in medieval France were commonly shaved of their hair (and hence the reference to shaving rather than cutting) so as to release the noxious fumes which were believed to plague the brain.[290] To be deemed or treated like a fool was a major cause for shame.

H. Scolding, Blaming, Accusing, Reproaching (Indicative of Shame or Guilt)

Terms that indicate "to scold," "to blame," "to accuse," or "to reproach," such as *blasmer*, *choser*, *blastengier*, *reprover*, *reprocher*, *reprendre*, and *encuser*, describe situations in which a

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290Edith A. Wright, "Medieval Attitudes Towards Mental Illness," Bulletin of the History of Medicine 7 (1939): 353; Barbara Swain, Fools and Folly during the Renaissance (New York: Columbia Press, 1932) 58. Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (New York: Vintage Books, 1973) 166, mentions that the head was shaved and vinegar or other caustic substances were applied so as to promote the removal of harmful humors and liquids from the brain. Richard Hunter and Ida MacAlpine, Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860 (1963; Hartsdale, New York: Carlisle Publishing, Inc., 1982) 22-23, speak of shaving the head as an "old remedy" which supposedly allowed the "grosse vapours" afflicting the brain to "fume out." Penelope Doob, Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 43, makes note of a twelfth-century exorcism in which the victim's beautiful blond tresses were shorn for fear "that the devil might keep his power in her by means of her hair."

character's failings are brought to his or her attention or to the attention of others. This can lead to shame if the character's status is diminished as a result. However, these same terms can also indicate the experience of guilt if the emphasis is placed not on the decline in status which the person thereby undergoes but on the wrongful deed which the person has committed or the punishment for which he or she is liable. The context often provides the key in ascertaining whether shame or guilt is to be understood. In (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur, for instance, the *jongleur* accuses St. Peter of cheating at their game of dice. In a later exchange, *blasmer* occurs with the expression *dire vilenie* to indicate that it is the shame in being called a robber, and not the denial of guilt, that is paramount in this situation:

> ... "Mout matalent
> Que vos ainz du gieu me blasmastes
> Et que vos larron m'apelastes."
> -"Sire, ge dis grant vilenie,
> Or me repend de ma folie. (ll. 280-284)
>
> "I am very angry that you accused me regarding this game and that you called me a thief." -"Sir, I said something very villainous, now I repent of my folly."

In (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, the wife in her deathbed confession contrasts *blasmer* with *loer*, thereby indicating that *blasmer* refers to the poor reputation which the adulterous wife feels she rightly deserves. She subsequently stresses the wrongful nature of what she has done, however, suggesting that she is alternating between shame and guilt:

> "Sire, molt ai esté proisie,
> Mes je suis fausse et renoïe.
> Sachiez de voir, tele est blasmee
> Qui vaut mout mieus que la loee:
> C'estoie je, qui los avoie,
> Mes mout mavese fame estoie,
> Quar a mes garçons me livroie
> Et avoeques moi les couchoie,
> Et d'aus fesoie mon talent:
> Moie coupe, je m'en repent." (ll. 123-132)
>
> "Sir, I have been much esteemed, but I am false and disloyal. Know truly, such people are blamed who are worth much more than those who are praised. I was one who had praise, but I was a very bad woman, for I gave myself over to my male attendants, and I lay with them, and fulfilled my desire with them: I am guilty, I repent of it."

In (102) Le Prestre comporté, the prior uses *blasmer* to indicate self-reproach and the recognition that he has done something shameful:

Lors s'est molt durement blasmés,
Quant li cuers li est revenus:
"Or sui je plus jovenes que nus,"
Dist il, "Puis que pasmer m'estuet
Par un homme qui ne se muet!
Or m'estoit trop li cuers fallis." (ll. 907-912)

Then he harshly blamed himself, when he came to: "Now I am more flighty than anyone," he said, "Because I was compelled to faint by a man who did not move! Now I am very feint of heart."

That he feels he is more flighty (*jovenes*) than anyone else plainly indicates that diminution in status which is the core of the experience of shame.[291] Earlier in the same fabliau the verb *reprendre* is used by the tavernkeeper when he tells the thieves who have brought a dead man to the tavern that they should put the body back where they found it or otherwise they will be *repris*: "vous serés tempre repris/ Et mis en rolle de pendus..." (ll. 707-708 "You will soon be accused and counted among the hanged"). In alluding to the punishment which can be expected, *reprendre* plainly describes an accusation of wrongdoing, which appertains to the experience of guilt. In (117) La Nonete, *encuser* occurs in a similar context. The imprisoned nun tells the prioress that if she fails to have her freed by the next morning, she will *encuser* her of all her misdeeds and she will then be imprisoned herself:

Se vous ne faites que hors soie,
De chi demain vremeil que soie,
Je croi, vo visaige ferai
Et tout vo fait acuserai:
Si serés au mains mise en mué! (ll. 67-71)

If you don't act so that I am out of here tomorrow, I believe I will make your face as red as silk, and I will accuse you of all your misdeeds: so tomorrow you will be imprisoned at the least!

The reference to blushing, however, suggests the experience of shame. Often in the act of accusation both shame and guilt operate, and sometimes it is difficult to ascertain which of the two is at the fore.

One aid in interpreting "accusation" words is the term itself: certain terms are generally used to describe accusations that bring shame, while others are typically used to describe accusations in which the emphasis is on the wrongful deed or the ensuing punishment and hence the underlying guilt. Words that appertain primarily to the experience of shame are *blastengier*, *reprover*, and *reprochier*. The word *blastengier*, derived from the Latin **blastemiare*, a

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[291]Ms. J reads *couars* or cowardly rather than *jovenes* (l. 911 J).

variation on the Latin *blasphemare*, has the sense of "to blame, reproach, scold, abuse, outrage, insult." It can also indicate "to blaspheme."[292] It occurs but rarely in the fabliaux, but always describes a verbal condemnation bordering on cursing and hence is not far removed from the sense of "to blaspheme." Whenever it is used, there is a strong sense that the verbal assault is designed to diminish the status of the intended target. In (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait, for instance, the soul of a peasant, angered at being refused admittance to heaven, reminds saints Peter, Paul and Thomas of their failings in life. The saints then complain to God about this peasant who "lor a dit honte" (l. 116: "shamed them with words") and God Himself then speaks to the peasant, using the word *blastengier* to describe the peasant's attack on the saints: "Mes apostles as blastengiés,/ Et avilliés et ledengiés!" (ll. 127-128: "You have reproached and debased and insulted my apostles!"). The association with the words *aviller* and *laidengier* further underscores the sense of shame conveyed by *blastengier*.[293]

The word *reprover*, meaning "to reproach, rebuke, blame, accuse"[294] is likewise used to indicate verbal assaults that cause shame. Like *blastengier*, it appears but rarely in the fabliaux and sometimes occurs with other words indicative of shame. In (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, for instance, the maidservant, in response to being called a bastard by her mistress, attacks the legitimacy of her mistress's children in turn:

> -"Bastarde, dame? Par grant mal!
> Li vostre enfant sunt molt loial
> Que vos avez du prestre eüs?" (ll. 365-367)
> "Bastard, lady? By great evil! Your children are very legitimate,
> which you have had with the priest?"

The mistress later uses the word *reprover* along with *dire honte* and *blastengier* in describing to

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292Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

293*Blastengier* is used to describe a similar verbal dressing-down in (5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse, in which the neighbor's wife condemns Dame Anieuse for not admitting defeat at the hands of her husband, a status-diminishing acknowledgement which the proud wife is reluctant to make:

> Anieuse, je te blastent
> Que tu respons si fetement!
> Quar tu vois bien apertement
> Que tu ne pués plus maintenant... (ll. 360-363)
> Anieuse, I reproach you for responding thus! For you see plainly that
> you can [do] no more now.

294Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

the priest what the servant said to her. She plainly sees the maidservant's words as an attack on her status and that of the priest as well:

> Sire, s'en saviez le voir
> De la honte qu'ele m'a dite,
> Vos l'en rendriez la merite,
> Car vos enfanz m'a reprovez.
> Mavesement voir vos provez,
> Qui soufrez qu'ele vos blatenge
> Et honist tote par sa gengle. (ll. 406-412)

> Certainly, if you knew the truth about the shame which she said to me, you would give her her just deserts, for she rebuked me over your children. You prove yourself badly when you allow her, through her pride, to blame and shame you.[295]

The verb *reprochier*, meaning "to blame, to scold, to accuse, to reproach"[296] is also indicative of shame. It occurs in one manuscript of (69) Les Tresces I, in which the woman posing as the wife says she forgives her husband for wrongly accusing her of adultery:

> "Que vos m'auez ci fait domage
> Que vos m'auez ci reprochié,
> Vos pardoin ie tot lo pechié..." (ll. 272-274 B)

> I entirely forgive you for the sin of injuring me and accusing me.

The wife forgives the accusation because it has harmed her; the accusation must therefore have entailed shame, for an accusation that pertains to the realm of guilt would in itself do no harm.[297]

The terms *encuser* and *reprendre* are generally used in the context of guilt. *Encuser*, meaning "to blame, accuse, denounce, reveal, make known,"[298] is often used to describe formal denunciations of wrongdoing which can lead to punishment, as in the case of the nun in (117) La Nonete who, as described above, threatens to denounce the prioress for her wrongdoings, for

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295*Reprover* appears to have a similar sense in (106) Le fol Vilain, in which the newlywed wife tells her ignorant husband not to let anyone else touch her *pudenda*, for otherwise "il me seroit reprovet" (l. 267: "I will be reproved for it"). The verb *reprover* also is used to introduce proverbs. See (43) La Male Honte II l. 204; (55) Le Pet au Vilain, l. 49.

296Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

297In support of this interpretation, it is interesting to note that version II of (69) Les Tresces uses the word *mesdire* (l. 348: "to slander") to describe what the husband has said to the wife. The noun *reproche* indicates "opprobrium, shame."

298Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

which the nun expects her to be imprisoned (l. 70).[299] It is also used to describe the act of revealing one's wrongdoings to another interested party in situations in which no formal or legal punishment follows. The canonesses in (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne, for instance, say they run no risk of being *encusé* for telling risqué stories: "n'en poons estre accusees" (l. 162: "We can not be accused"). Similarly the butcher in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville promises the maidservant that he will not tell her mistress that she has slept with him: "En ma vie ne li dirai/ Ne ja ne t'en encuserai" (ll. 225-226). In these situations, the emphasis on wrongdoing and the need to avoid getting caught bespeak the experience of guilt.

The verb *reprendre* has the sense of "to seize or take once again." One of its extended meanings is "to return to something to correct it," and, hence, "to blame, reprimand, rebuke, accuse."[300] It is used in situations that are usually indicative of guilt. In (60) Le Chapelain, the town provost uses *reprendre* to describe a formal accusation of murder and theft brought before him. He refers to the accusation as "ce dont vos lou reprenez" (l. 204: "that which you accuse him of"). In two instances in (102) Le Prestre comporté, *reprendre* describes an accusation of murder (ll. 707, 1090), and in (117) La Nonete (l. 212) it describes the denunciation of an abbess to the assembled chapter for sexual misconduct. In other instances *reprendre* is used to describe the act of blaming or finding fault with someone, as in (100) Le Vallet qui d'Aise a Malaise se met, in which the mother tells her future son-in-law that there is nothing to *reprendre* in her daughter:

> "On ne set en li que reprendre,
> Qu'ele ne saice bien filer
> Et bien prestir et bien buer." (ll. 158-160)
> One does not know what to blame her for, for she knows well how
> to sew and make bread and do the washing.

While the focus here is again on the act of wrongdoing (or rather, its absence), in this latter situation the degree of guilt is slight.[301]

The word *blasmer* and the noun *blasme* are used in the context both of shame and guilt.

299See also (47) Les trois Boçus l. 139; (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 537.

300Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

301See also(69) Les Tresces I l. 2 and (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne l. 141, both of which refer to the *conteur* being blamed for telling the fabliaux, and (117) La Nonete, which begins with the adage, "On de doit mie trop reprendre" (l. 1: "One should not blame too much") a fool who does something through ignorance.

Blasmer is defined as "to blame, to scold or reproach someone for what they have done; to accuse or charge; to menace, to blaspheme." The noun *blasme* refers to blame, disgrace, accusation or judgement by which one blames or accuses another.[302] In describing an accusation or rebuke for wrongdoing, the words pertain to the experience of guilt. If, however, the emphasis is on the public nature of the accusation or the disgrace or decline in status which the blamed person suffers, then the experience of shame is indicated. Sometimes it is difficult to identify which sense is operative in a given situation. When they indicate "to accuse" or "accusation," the words are usually indicative of the experience of guilt. Hence the thieves in (74) Le Sacristain III tell the tavernkeeper that they will take the body of the dead monk back to where they found it, so that he will not suffer from the *blasme*, the accusation of murder: "Vostre ostel en delivrerons,/ Si que jamais n'en orroiz blame" (l. 458-459: "We will deliver your house from it (the body), so that you will never have the blame)". Fearful of punishment and ready to call out all his friends, cousins and brothers in the middle of the night to attest to his innocence, he is plainly operating from the perspective of guilt. Similarly the husband in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, reassured regarding his wife's fidelity, states that his sister, who first informed him of his wife's purported affair, describes his sister to his wife as "cele ke vus miht en blame" (l. 572: "she who put you in blame").[303]

When *blasmer* is used in the sense of "to blame," the emphasis is generally on the fault committed and not the status of the perpetrator, indicating the experience of guilt rather than shame. Hence in (102) Le Prestre comporté, the *conteur* says that the priest who loves the wife of a *preudhomme* openly can be greatly blamed (l. 7: "il faisoit molt a blasmer"), and the wife in (17) Les Braies au Cordelier tells her husband, when he arrives home with seemingly incontrovertible proof of her infidelity, "Ne doi estre de riens blasmee" (l. 297: I should not be blamed for anything"). Some degree of shame may also be understood as operative in these situations, however; the priest can be understood as having a bad reputation because of his lechery, and by *blasmée* the wife may be indicating that her husband has wrongly slandered her and is thereby diminishing her status. The texts can be interpreted either way.[304]

302Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

303See also (19) La Borgoise d'Orliens l. 245 A; (74) Le Sacristain I ll. 193, 432; III l. 251.

304See also (65) La Pucele qui voloit voler l. 100, in which the cleric tells the young girl whom he impregnated that she did much for which she is rightly blamed ("Trop par en faites a blasmer"). The cleric had impregnated her when he heard that she wanted to fly. Copulation, he had told her, would give her a tail.

In many instances *blame* and *blasmer* refer explicitly to disgrace, bad reputations, or ill repute. In such instances the experience of shame is clearly indicated. Hence in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, the wife explains that she had an affair with her nephew because there would be no gossip or *blasme* if he was at her household frequently:

> "Por le blasme que je cremoie
> Le neveu mon seignor amoie,
> Quar a mes chambres bien sovent
> Pooit venir, veant la gent:
> Ja n'en fust blasme ne parole. (ll. 183-187)
>
> On account of the blame which I feared, I loved my lord's nephew,
> for he could come to my chambers often, in the presence of others,
> and never would there be any blame or gossip.

Similarly in (117) La Nonete the abbess takes steps to preserve the reputation of the abbey and remove the wanton nun from *blasme*:

> [L'abbesse] mieus voet c'on le mette
> Em prison qu'elle s'entremete
> De faire a l'abbie diffame.
> Et pour le jeter hors de blasme
> Fu li lassete em prison mise... (ll. 45-49)
>
> The abbess preferred that one put her in prison than that she bring
> infamy on the abbey; and so to remove her from blame was the
> poor little one put in prison...

Describing the disgrace that diminishes reputations, the word *blasme* in such situations can be understood as indicative of shame.[305]

> Se grosse iestes, ce est nature,
> Mes ce estoit grant desmesure
> Que par l'air voliez voler:
> Trop par en faites a blasmer,
> De poi estes apesantie. (ll. 97-101)
>
> If you are pregnant, that is according to nature, but it was greatly beyond
> the boundaries of nature that you wanted to fly: you did much to be
> blamed, with weight are you weighed down.

By *blasmer*, the cleric means that she has done something blameworthy, something for which she is guilty. One could also interpret *blasmer* here as indicating that she has done something shameful by becoming pregnant out of wedlock.

[305]See also (1) Estormi l. 601; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 125; (46) La Coille noire l. 87; (69) Les Tresces I l. 136; II l. 38; (83) La Dame escoillee l. 257 E; (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier l. 66; (114) La Gageure l. 47; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 6. The word *blasmés* in (48) L'Enfant qui fu remis au Soleil presents an interesting case. The *conteur* states that the husband has been "blasmés et laidengiés" (l. 140) by his wife's words and deeds. She has diminished his reputation by cuckolding him and then telling him an outrageous

Blasmer in the sense of "to rebuke, scold" in some instances appears to have the same sense as *dire honte*, describing the act of saying to a person's face what shameful thing he or she has done. The result is a diminution of that person's status and the experience of shame. Hence in the example cited above from (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur, Saint Peter uses the word *blasmer* to describe the *jongleur*'s accusation of cheating (l. 281). The nurse in (30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue similarly is said to *blasmer* the young girl when she berates her for losing her virginity to a passing knight:

> "A! traitresse, de put erre,"
> Fet ele, "Comme ore m'auez traie
> E desconfite et hunie.
> Quant uostre pere le sauera
> Ja rin mestir ne me auera."
> Dunc la comencat a tencir
> A blamer e a lendengir
> E trop vilment la demena.
> E cele nul mot ne sona. (ll. 68-76 i)

> "A! Traitress, of stinking lineage," she said, "How you have now betrayed and undone and shamed me! When your father finds out, he will have no need of me." Then she began to reproach, blame and insult her, and vilely she treated her. And she [the girl] did not utter a word.

Later, the young girl tells the knight that her nurse "A grant honte m'ad atornee" (l. 105 i: "Turned me to great shame"). This, combined with the use of the words *laidengier* and *vilment*, shows that the nurse has assaulted the girl's status.[306]

In other instances, the word *blasmer* in the sense of "to rebuke, scold" is used in contexts that appear more indicative of the experience of guilt. In (79) Le povre Clerc, for instance, the wife tells the cleric she can not lodge him for the evening because her husband would rebuke her

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story to explain how she conceived a child in his absence. The editors of the NRCF translate *blasmer* here as "bafouer" (to ridicule) and describe this as an unusual usage. It would be more consistent with how *blasmer* is used elsewhere in the fabliaux corpus to translate it as "to disgrace," but *laidengier* is also problematic. As we saw above, *laidengier* typically describes vicious verbal or physical assaults, neither of which the wife does to her husband in this fabliau. In my opinion the reading of ms. A is to be preferred.

306See also (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur l. 281; (13) Le Vilain Mire l. 9; (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 907; (118) Le Jugement l. 6. In (75) Le Prestre qui manja Mores, *se blasmer* is used along with *se maudire* to describe the reaction of the priest's sergeants when they see the priest's horse come home riderless, a sign, they think, that the priest is dead: "Chascun se maudit et se blasme" (l. 61). They are likely feeling shame because his death is unavenged.

(l. 130: "*blasmeroit*") for lodging anyone without permission. This focus on the wrongful act suggests guilt.[307] However, an element of shame may also be present: by acting without her husband's permission, the wife would be raising herself above him. To *blasmer* her after an act of such insolence and pride would therefore serve to diminish her status. *Blasmer* and *blasme* are thus not clear-cut indicators of either shame or guilt. As suggested above, the context must be the guide.

Blasmer is paired most often with *choser* in the expression *blasmer et choser*. This expression is used to describe a lengthy and serious verbal assault. Again, the context must be the guide in determining whether shame or guilt is indicated. In (54) Dame qui fist trois Tors entor le Moustier, for instance, the husband uses the expression *blasmer et choser* (l. 162) to describe the insults and accusations which he hurled at his wife when he suspected her of having been out of the house for a tryst with her lover. In this instance, the nature of the insults ["Dame orde, vilz putainz provee" (l. 121: "Filthy woman, stinking proven whore"] indicate the experience of shame. In (69) Les Tresces, the expression could be indicative of either shame or guilt. The *conteur* uses the expression to describe what the wife (or in fact, the woman posing as the wife) says to her husband when she rebukes him for having falsely accused her of adultery. While it is clear that he shamed her when he originally accused her, it is unclear whether the wife's rebuke calls attention to his guilt in so accusing her -- her words focus on the wrong done -- or whether they are an attempt to diminish his status in turn -- she does in fact promise that he will have shame if he says anything more to her that is shameful:

> Et la dame lo blasme et chose
> Et dit que, se Deus la secore,
> Grant honte li auoit mis sore,
> Car el n'a soin de puterie:
> Ce fu mauuaise lecherie!
> Et si li dit mais tel outrage
> Tost i aura honte et domage. (ll. 299-305 B)

> And the woman rebukes and scolds him and says that, so God may help her, he put much shame upon her, for she had no care for such whoring: this was wicked lechery! And if he says such outrage to her any more, he will soon suffer shame and harm.[308]

More than *blasmer*, the word *choser* has the sense of verbal argument or contest. Its

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307See also (65) La Pucele qui voloit voler l. 94.

308See also (4) Auberee l. 37.

meaning in the various Old French dictionaries is given as "to scold, bawl out" "to dispute," and "to blame, rebuke, reprimand."[309] As with *blasmer*, the context serves as the best guide in determining whether *choser* denotes the experience of shame or guilt. In (4) Auberee, the use of the word *mesfaire* in combination with a focus on wrongdoing suggest the experience of guilt. Auberée tells the young girl, thrown out of her house by her suspicious husband, that she should not go to her father's house as he will *choser* her for doing some wrong:

> "Veus tu que tes peres te chose?
> Il cuideroit qu'aucun meffet
> Eüses a ton seignor fet,
> Or qu'il t'eüst prise provee
> Et o ton lecheor trovee! (ll. 284-288)
>
> Do you want your father to bawl you out? I would think that you did some wrong towards your lord, or that he had caught you, proven, and found you with your lover!

In (16) La Housse partie II, in contrast, *choser* refers to a father's fear that his son will be rebuked by people in general. This suggests a concern for his son's status in their eyes: "Mais prier t'en vuel d'une cose/ Pour chou que nus hom ne t'en cose..." (ll. 79-80: "But I wish to ask you for one thing, so that no one may reprimand you...").[310]

The contexts in which terms indicating scolding, blaming, accusing or reproaching are employed show that a verbal denunciation to a person's face was a situation where shame and guilt could both be operative. The verbalization, the act of making known that which is shameful, could in itself serve to diminish the status of the perpetrator. This is the basic sense of *dire honte*. A formal accusation of wrongdoing was also the first step in the legal process of bringing a charge against a person, and in this sense could indicate both guilt and -- if the offense were cause for shame -- "moral shame," that kind of shame discussed above in Chapter 1 which arises when a person feels ashamed of a moral transgression. To scold or rebuke a person could also in itself be a form of punishment, a way to correct and castigate someone for some wrong done, and hence be part of the experience of guilt.

309Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

310See also (117) La Nonete ll. 4-5; (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne l. (254).

Section 2: The Vocabulary of Guilt

In English, "guilt" normally refers either to feelings of culpability or to the fact that one has committed some wrongful act. It is not used to describe the punishment which committing a wrongful act entails. The word "guilt" thus differs from "shame," which, in the form of "shaming," can be used to describe the sanction that a shameful act entails. Words which I describe as indicative of the experience of guilt may therefore include terms which the reader may not typically associate with guilt. The definition of guilt as outlined in Chapter 1 is the guide in determining what terms or situations should be understood as indicators of guilt. According to this definition, the experience of guilt is comprised of transgressions of behavioral norms or harm caused to an "Other" which results in a disruption of the balance in the relationship which exists between the perpetrator and the "Other." The fear of chastisement, the attempt to make amends for the misdeed, and punishment are part of the experience of guilt. Recognition that balance has been restored, either in the form of forgiveness or being deemed quit of the debt incurred by the wrongful act, can also be regarded as part of the experience of guilt.

In analyzing the vocabulary of shame in the fabliaux, I discussed in turn each of the core terms directly indicative of shame. Many of these terms denoted several aspects of the shame experience. *Honte*, for instance, could denote the state of shame, the feeling of shame (in the expression *avoir honte*), the act of bringing shame upon another (*faire honte*), and the sanction of shame. In the case of guilt, even core terms such as *pechié* and *repentir* generally describe only one component of the experience of guilt. I have therefore organized my analysis of the vocabulary of guilt not according to core terms, but according to the various components of the experience of guilt. I discuss in turn the terms that describe the state of guilt; wrongful acts or the commission of wrongful acts; the act of harming another; regret over committing wrongful acts; accusations of wrongdoing and judgements regarding guilt and punishment; punishment and the fear of punishment; the act of making amends for wrongful acts and restoring the balance with the "Other;" and, finally, forgiveness and the recognition that the balance with the "Other" has been restored.[311]

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[311]This method of organizing the material differs from that employed in the only other study of the vocabulary of guilt in Old French, that of Yedlicka. Yedlicka uses the various elements of the sacrament of penance as his frame. This unfortunately leads to a significant amount of duplication in his study. For example, terms describing sin as a weight or burden are described in two different places in the book, and the imagery of penance as beating laundry or doing washing is described in

A. Terms Denoting the State of Guilt: Cope, Coper, Copable, Encoper, Rencoper, Descoper; Faute

The word *cope* most directly translates what in English is termed "guilt," but it can not be regarded as a core term in the fabliaux. The word and its derivatives and related terms appear only 16 times in the fabliaux in total. They are not frequently linked to other terms, either conceptually or through word pairs.[312]

In its basic sense, *cope* refers to "guilt," "fault" or "sin."[313] In the fabliaux it is not necessarily employed in a religious context, to indicate sin before God, but rather to indicate any sort of wrongdoing: theft, adultery, murder, and, in one humorous case, expelling intestinal gas at a noble feast. The expression *avoir cope* usually occurs in the negative. When the provost in (2) Constant du Hamel accuses Constant of stealing wheat, for instance, Constant protests his innocence with the words, "ge n'i ai coupes!" (l. 280: "I am not guilty of it!).[314]

The adjective *copable*, meaning "guilty,"[315] occurs just once, in (4) Auberee. The old seamstress Auberée, practicing a deceit on a newlywed bourgeois so as to free his wife from suspicion of adultery, calls him *coupable* (l. 512) for throwing his wife out of the house at matins. The expression *battre sa cope*, describing the act of striking one's chest and uttering the words "moie coupe,"[316] occurs in two instances in the fabliaux,[317] and the expression *moie cope*, an acknowledgement of guilt,[318] occurs once.[319] In all three instances, the context is religious,

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three. Yedlicka's organization would not suffice for my purposes also because I am examining instances of guilt outside the experience of penance. Organizing the material according to the various *fora* of guilt (the internal forum of penance, the external forum of the ecclesiastical courts, and the secular courts) would skew the material as the same vocabulary is often used in all three. See discussion below.

[312]Yedlicka, p. 327, cites only one instance of the use of the word *cope* in his study of medieval French didactic literature. The example he cites is from Villon.

[313]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[314]See also (63) Celui qui bota la Pierre II l. 94, (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 450, (124) Trubert l. 541; (126) Gonbaut ll. 29, 35.

[315]Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[316]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[317](33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 132; (94) Le Prestre qui dist la Passion l. 37.

[318]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

describing the *mea culpa* either during confession or during the recitation of the *Confiteor* at Mass.[320]

The related verb *encoper* indicates "to accuse, to charge; to condemn, sentence." [321] In the fabliaux it is used to describe accusations of murder, adultery, and failing to carry out a friend's last wishes. The word does not describe formal plaints at law, but simple accusations of wrongdoing.[322] The adulterous wife in (69) Les Tresces I, for instance, when caught by her husband with a lover in the house, rushes about to perform some machinations to make him think he dreamed the whole scene. The *conteur* says her goal is not to be *encopée*: "La borioise cele part cort/ Qui ne uost pas estre encorpee" (ll. 220-221 B: "The bourgoise, who did not want to be accused, ran this way").

The verb *rencoper*, occurring just once in the fabliaux, describes yet another aspect of the experience of guilt, the act of blaming or reproaching.[323] The word appears in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre to describe the friars' reproach to the dying priest for failing to make a bequest to them:

> Chascons des freres li rencope,
> Et li mostre par exemplaire
> K'ilh puet un des dons retraire
> Et rapeler por iaus doner... (ll. 117-120)
>
> Each one of the friars reproaches him and shows him through examples that he can retract and recall one of his bequests in order to give it to them...

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[319](33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 134.

[320]The expression "battre sa geule" occurs in a secular context in (4) Auberee when the old seamstress Auberée tells the newlywed husband that he will strike his chest for the great wrong he has done in throwing his wife out of the house:

> Mout par as fet grant mesprison
> -Si en batras encore ta geule -
> D'envoier a tele eure seule
> Fame qui si bele fourme a! (ll. 499-502)
>
> You have done a great wrong -- you will yet beat your chest over it -- by sending out all alone at such an hour a woman who has such a beautiful form!

Similarly the madam of a house of prostitution in (7) Boivin de Provins, feigning guilt over having taken a girl away from her family, beats her chest three times (l. 252: "bat trois foiz sa poitrine") and says she has sinned greatly.

[321]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[322]See also (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 449; (43) La Male Honte l. 60 F.

[323]Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

Unlike many of the other "blaming" words discussed above, there is no sense of shaming involved in this usage.

The verb *descouper*, the opposite of *couper*, has the sense of "to clear, to exonerate, to exculpate."[324] It too occurs just once in the fabliaux, to indicate the exoneration of the companions of the foolish peasant in (106) Le fol Vilain who wrongly accuses them of assaulting him when in fact he has himself caused a rockslide that brought about his injuries:

> Mais li voisin en dissent tant,
> Qui le troverent seul getant,
> Que cil en furent descoupé. (ll. 171-173)
> But the neighbors who found him lying alone said so much about it
> that they (the friends) were exonerated.

The meaning of *cope*, *coper*, and its derivatives is very straight-forward, then. While the derivatives describe various components of the experience of guilt, such as "to reproach," "to accuse," and "to exonerate," neither *cope*, *coper*, nor their derivatives are linked conceptually to other realms of experience. Indeed, they are rarely even paired with other expressions denoting guilt. The only exception are the expressions *batre sa cope* and *moie cope*, which, being used in the context of confession, occur with other terms denoting repentance, e.g., "crier merci," "penitance," and "se repentir."

B. Terms Denoting Wrongful Acts

The bulk of the occurrences of guilt in the fabliaux are indicated by terms that denote wrongful acts or their commission. Many of these, because of their frequency of usage, various shades of meaning, and large number of associations in the semantic network, can be regarded as core terms.

1. Pechié, Pechier, Pechable, Pecheor, Pecheris

The noun *pechié* in its basic sense indicates "sin," "wrong," or "fault," and the verb *pechier* means "to sin" or "to make a mistake, to commit some wrong, to be at fault."[325] In the fabliaux, a sense of sin is clearly conveyed by the words when characters are presented as

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[324]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[325]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

confessing their sins, doing penance, and expiating them through good deeds.[326] *Pechié* can refer also to the state of guilt.[327] In (105) Les Sohais, for instance, a good man, granted a wish by some angels, wishes to have the wealth possessed by his brother, but "sans pecciet" (l. 18). Guilt is indicated by *pechié* also in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, in which the confessor to a dying woman (actually the woman's husband in disguise) tells her, "Li pechiez doubles en estoit" (l. 177: "The sin was double in that") when she confesses that one of the men with whom she had an affair was her husband's nephew. To say that someone dwelt in sin or sinned a lot was a way to characterize someone in a negative fashion. Hence the lecherous friar who preys on a young girl in (56) Frere Denise is described as "cil, qui en pechié soronde" (l. 100: "he who overflowed with sin"), and in (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur the *conteur* notes, by way of explaining why the *jongleur* goes to hell, that he "En fole pechié mist son usaige" (l. 37: "led a sinful life").[328]

What strikes the modern reader of the fabliaux is the frequent use of the word *pechié* outside the context of the sacrament of penance.[329] The types of offenses considered *pechié* run the entire gamut, from murder to adultery to theft to more unusual offenses: the fault committed by women who refuse to return the affections of their courtly lover,[330] wrongful accusations of adultery,[331] and even failure to keep an agreement, described by *pechié* in (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux. In this fabliau, a valet claims that his master, the miller, wronged him by failing to procure for his pleasure a beautiful young girl, in payment for which the valet has given to the miller a small pig. The valet demands that the pig be returned, claiming that the miller has it *à pechié*: "Sire, mon porciel me rendés,/ C'a tort et a pechiet l'avés" (ll. 311-312: "Sir, return my

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[326]See (16) La Housse partie I l. 263; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 109, 137, 171; (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait l. 154; (111) Le Testament de l'Asne l. 160; (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne l. 172; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 287.

[327]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[328]See also (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur l. 53.

[329]In addition to the examples cited below, see also (7) Boivin de Provins l. 253; (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine ll. 82, 164; (37) La vieille Truande l. 200 H; (69) Les Tresces II l. 268; (74) Le Sacristain I ll. 96, 245; (85) Les quatres Prestres l. 80; (117) La Nonete l. 132; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 343.

[330](93) Guillaume au Faucon l. 43; (113) Le Chevalier a la Corbeille l. 96.

[331](69) Les Tresces l. 274 B.

pig to me, for you have it wrongly and with fault"). One might expect *pechié* to be associated most frequently with other terms deriving from the sacrament of penance, such as *pardoner* and *repentir*. While this association does occur, particularly (and naturally) in the context of confession and repentance, the word with which *pechié* is most commonly paired in the fabliaux is *tort*. In (74) Le Sacristain I, for instance, the wife warns her husband not to kill the sacristan who is coming to their house for a lover's tryst, "Car ce seroit peciés et tors" (l. 96: "For this would be a sin and wrongful").[332]

The noun *pecheor* (or *pechiere* in the *cas sujet*), meaning "sinner,"[333] is used most often in exclamatory statements, as in (125) Le Moigne, in which the monk exclaims, upon becoming sexually aroused at the sight of some beautiful women, "Las...je sui mors!/ "Et que ferai je, las pechieres?" (ll. 16-17: "Alas...I am dead! And what will I do, miserable sinner?").[334] *Pecheor* is also used to denote pilgrims,[335] and *pecheris* is used as a synonym for prostitute.[336]

In its sense as "sin," *pechié* is sometimes presented as an active agent. Rather than being something which one does, it is something which is done to a person. Hence in (16) La Housse partie I, the son, upon being made to realize that he has done wrong in turning his father out of the house, blames his actions on the devil (*anemis*) and sin (*pechié*):

> Vers son pere torna sa chiere:
> "Peres," fet-il, "Tornez arriere!
> C'estoit anemis et pechié
> Qui me cuide avoir aguetié.
> Mes, se Dieu plest, ce ne puet estre! (ll. 371-375)
>
> He turned his face towards his father: "Father," he said, "Come back! It was the devil and sin which thought to have ensnared me. But, so may it please God, this can not be!

Similarly in (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame, the death of a knight at a tournament is described as the result of sin running on and encumbering the knights at the

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[332]See also (17) Les Braies au Cordelier l. 330; (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux l. 312; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 1211.

[333]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[334]See also (14) Aloul l. 943; (20) Cele qui se fist foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari l. 93 A/ 89 C/ 93 E/ 89 K/ 89 I.

[335](12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille l. 293.

[336](91) Le Prestre et Alison l. 145.

tourney:

> Mout avoient bien commancié
> A tornoier tuit, qant pechié
> Lor corut sor et encombrier,
> Que mort i ot un chevalier. (ll. 85-88)
>
> They had all begun to tourney well, when sin ran up to them and encumbered them, for a knight died.

The word *pechié* is used in some contexts not directly indicative of guilt. Often it denotes "misfortune" or a regrettable occurrence.[337] The origins of this usage lay in the common belief that one could be punished for one's sins in one's lifetime. Misfortunes were a sign of God's anger and a call to conversion.[338] Thus if one suffered some sort of setback, like the two clerics in (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers I whose horse and wheat are stolen, one could exclaim, like them, "Pechiez nos a a essil mis!" (l. 110: "Sins have put us in exile!").[339] If the sin or sins that have caused the misfortune are the offenses committed earlier in the fabliau by the character who suffers the misfortune, guilt may be indicated. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, for instance, the priest seeks to trick a knight into paying an exorbitant sum for a night's lodging. When he finds himself bound to have his mistress sleep with the knight, he laments to his mistress that his sins have tricked him: "...mes peciés...m'a engingné et nuit" (ll. 843-844: "...my sins...have tricked and harmed me").[340]

We saw above that *honte* was often used as a synonym for sex. Interestingly, *pechié* is used twice in the fabliaux to indicate the male sexual organ. In both cases, it is a female character who uses the term: the mother of the young girl in (58) L'Esquiriel (l. 27.11) and the wife in (31) Les quatre Sohais Saint Martin (l. 103 Z).[341] This echoes a passage in Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de la Rose* in which Reason advises that women should use

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[337]Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch. Cf. Payen 214-215.

[338]Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law 20; Jean Delumeau, Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th - 18th Centuries, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 252, 301; Jean-Charles Payen, Le motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale (Des origines à 1230) (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967) 101.

[339]See also (6) Barat et Haimet l. 367; (51) Les deus Changeors l. 106; (74) Le Sacristain I l. 188; (75) Le Prestre qui manja Mores l. 79; (76) La Plantez l. 91, (124) Trubert l. 66.

[340]See also (74) Le Sacristain III l. 405.

[341]See also (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine, in which the wife refers to her husband's penis as "Vostre deable de pendeloche" (l. 65: "Your devil of a suspended object").

the direct term for sexual organs and acts rather than euphemisms. The implication is that women tend to use euphemisms.[342]

2. Mesfaire, Mesfait

The verb *mesfaire* is defined as "to do wrong to, to harm; to slander; to commit a fault, to commit an infraction against the rules," and, in the reflexive, "to dishonor oneself."[343] In most instances in which the word appears in the fabliaux, it is the first sense which is conveyed and a victim who has been wronged is in evidence.[344] Typical is the usage in (13) Le Vilain Mire, in which the husband, feigning guilt each day for beating his wife, tells her each evening,

> "Dame," fet il, "Por Deu, merci!
> Tot ce m'a fet fere Anemi.
> De ce que batue uos ai
> Et de quant que mesfet uos ai
> J'en sui dolenz et repentans. (ll. 97-101)
>
> "Lady," he said, "for God's sake, mercy! The devil has made me do all this. I am very sad and repentant for beating you and for however I have wronged you.

Likewise in (69) Les Tresces I, the *conteur* uses the verb *mesfaire* to describe the wife's actions in holding her lover captive. Her husband, having caught an intruder in their bed in the middle of the night, has placed the man under a tub and ordered his wife to hold down the tub while he gets a torch in order to see who the man is. The context in which *mesfaire* is used, with the object *lo* referring to the wife's lover, makes it clear that he is a victim of the action described by *mesfaire*: "Se pesa li que tant mesfist/ Q'ele lo fist contre son cuer" (ll. 66-67 B: "It weighed on her that she did such wrong, for she did it to him against her will").[345]

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[342]Cf. Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux, ch. 5.

[343]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[344]This of course is consistent with the definition of guilt as harm done to an "Other." In addition to the examples that follow, see (1) Estormi ll. 316, 585; (13) Le Vilain Mire l. 100 C; (32) Les trois Meschines l. 79; (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'amor de sa Dame l. 177; (116) Le Pliçon l. 63; and (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 534.

[345] Ms. X has *mesprist* rather than *mesfist*. The verb *mesprendre* is discussed below, under *4. Mesprendre*. There are only a few instances in which *mesfaire* indicates "to do wrong" rather than "to wrong another." In (74) Le Sacristain II the prior uses *mesfaire* to describe the sacristan's actions in falling asleep on the abbey latrine. He compares this to another wrongful act that has no obvious victim who is wronged, stumbling while reading scripture:

> "Hai, fait il, "Com est vileins

The noun *mesfait*, meaning "offence, misdeed,"[346] likewise in the fabliaux often bears the sense of "harm done to another." In (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame, for instance, a knight, posing as a ghost, relays his request for forgiveness through the husband of the woman he loves. The *mesfait* for which he requests forgiveness is a wrong which has been done to the woman:

> -"Sire, je sui en molt grant poine,
> Ne ja mais jor n'en istra m'ame
> De ci a tant que cele dame,
> Qui o vos gist, pardoné m'ait,
> Se il li plaist, un sol mesfait
> Que je li fis con je vivoie. (ll. 206-211)
>
> Sir, I am in very great torment, my soul will never issue from it for a day until this woman who lies with you pardons me, if it pleases her, a single offense which I did to her when I was alive.[347]

The expression *faire mesfait* is usually followed by a phrase beginning with *à*, indicating who has been harmed. In (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, for instance, the bishop states that Holy Church ("sainte Esglise") has been wronged by the priest when he buries his ass in sacred ground:

> Li sougretains qui ci se dort!
> S'il le compaire n'est pas tort,
> Demain, quant serons en chapitre:
> S'il eüst failli a l'espitre,
> N'eüst il mie plus meffait! "(ll. 426-431)
>
> "Ha!" he said, "How villainous is the sacristan, who sleeps here! If he pays for it tomorrow, when we are assembled as a chapter, it won't be wrong: if he had stumbled reading scripture, he could not have done more wrong.

It is interesting to note that stumbling while reading scripture was a sin that is listed as meriting confession in the Benedictine rule. See also (124) Trubert l. 84. A rather unusual use of *mesfaire* occurs in (44) Le Cuvier in which a woman is hiding her lover under a washing tub that she has borrowed from a neighbor. When the neighbor sends a serving girl to ask for the return of the tub, the woman tells the girl,

> "Ralez li dire vistement
> Que, par mon chief, trop se mesfet:
> Je n'ai pas de son cuvier fet!" (ll. 80-82)
>
> Go back and tell her quickly that, by my head, she does great wrong: I have not finished with her tub!

[346]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[347]See also (1) Estormi l. 423; (32) Les trois Meschines l. 66; (78) La Housse partie II ll. 140, 165; (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 538; (107) Les deus Vilains l. 164.

"Faus desleaux, Deu anemis!
Ou aveiz vos vostre asne mis?"
Dist l'esvesques: "Mout aveiz fait
A sainte Esglise grant meffait,
Onques mais nuns si grant n'oÿ,
Qui aveiz votre asne enfoÿ
La ou on met gent crestienne. (ll. 95-101)

False disloyal one, enemy of God! Where have you put your ass?" The bishop said, "You have done a great wrong to Holy Church, never have I heard of such a serious one, (you) who have buried your ass there where one puts Christians.[348]

Similar to *pechié*, *mesfait* can also simply indicate "misdeed" without there being a wronged victim, as in the opening lines of three of the manuscripts of (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, in which the *conteur* advises the listener, "Et cil ne fet mie folie/ Qui d'autrui mesfet se chastie" (ll. 5-6 A: "And he does not at all do anything foolish who disciplines himself through (learning about) the misdeed of another").[349]

As an adjective and past participle, *mesfait* has the sense of "guilty."[350] In (48) L'Enfant qui fut remis au Soleil, for instance, the *conteur* states that the husband will never be shamed for being cuckolded because the wife feels guilty: "Mes or ne sera plus laidis,/ Pour ce qu'elle se sent mesfaite (ll. 142-143: "But he will never be shamed because she felt guilty." Similarly, in (70) Les Sohait des Vez the wife uses the word *mesfait* to describe herself after she has hit her husband in her sleep:

"Si fis comme fame endormie.
Por Deu, ne vos coreciez mie,
Que se je ai folie faite,
Et je m'an rant vers vous mesfaite,
Si vos en pri merci de cuer!" (ll. 175-179)

"I acted like a woman asleep. For God's sake do not be angry at all, for if I have done folly, and render myself to you, guilty, so I pray you for mercy from the heart."

For the most part the words *mesfaire* and *mesfait* occur with other terms indicative of the experience of guilt, such as *pardon*, *merci*, *repentir*, *mesprendre*, *forfait* and *compere*, as in the

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[348]See also (4) Auberee l. 285.

[349]See also (111) Le Testament de l'Asne l. 159; (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne l. 174.

[350]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch. The word can also indicate "disfigured, deformed, sick," but it does not appear in this sense in the fabliaux.

examples just cited. The noun *mesfait* is paired with *pechié* in (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, in which the priest gives 20 pounds to the bishop, in return for which the bishop forgives the ass "ses meffais/ Et toz les pechiez qu'il at fais!" (ll. 159-160: "his misdeeds and all the sins which he has committed!"). Interestingly, *mesfait* is sometimes paired or associated with *vilenie*, a term indicative of the experience of shame. In (107) Les deus Vilains, for instance, the expression *le vilenie et le mesfait* is used to describe the act of cuckolding, which the wife thinks she has done to her husband, though in fact she has only dreamed it:

> Et si cuide bien avoir fait
> Le vilonie et le mesfait,
> Por uec qu'ele l'avoit songiet. (ll. 163-165)
> And she well thought she had done the villainy and the misdeed,
> because she had dreamed it.

Similarly in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk the expression *mesfaire la vilenie* is used to describe the attempted seduction of a married woman. The wife, pretending to be outraged over the attempt, says to her household,

> Unc mes ne m'avint en ma vie
> Ke hom mesfeiht la vileinie:
> Si il ne seit cher comparé,
> A tuz jurs serrai vergundé. (ll. 533-536)
> Never did it happen in my life that a man committed such a
> villainous deed: if he does not pay for it dearly, I will be shamed
> for the rest of my life.[351]

Cuckolding or propositioning a loyal married woman entails both shame and guilt: it involves a violation of a code of conduct (guilt) and also a diminution of the wife's status and (in the case of cuckolding) the status of her husband (shame). In the sense of "to harm another," *mesfaire* encompasses the harm comprised of shaming a person.[352]

3. Forfaire, Forfait

The verb *forfaire* appears but rarely in the fabliaux. Three out of the eight occurrences are from the same fabliau. Its sense is very similar to that of *mesfaire*, but the infrequency with

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[351]See also (32) Les trois Meschines, in which one girl exclaims, "Certes, vez ci vilain mesfet!" (l. 66: "Certainly, behold a villainous misdeed!) when the other, attempting to urinate in some facial powder which she and two other girls have bought, expels some bowel gas instead, causing all the powder to fly away. The adjective *vilain*, as we saw above, was commonly associated with things scatological.

[352]As noted above, *mesfaire* in the reflexive can indicate "to dishonor oneself."

which it appears suggests that *mesfaire* in large measure displaced it. According to the various Old French dictionaries, its basic sense is "to transgress, to go outside the limits of what one should do, to do wrong."[353] Hence in (124) Trubert, the duke twice uses the verb *forfaire* in the negative to assert that he has done no wrong to Trubert. When Trubert ties him to a tree in preparation to beating him, he says to Trubert, "Ja ne vos ai ge riens forfet!" (l. 802: "I have done you no wrong!"). Later, in talking to a person whom he thinks is Trubert's sister (and who in fact is Trubert in disguise), the duke relates:

> "Vostre frere m'a mal bailli;
> Il a bien ou cors l'anemi,
> Que je ne li ai riens forfet
> Et dou pis que il puet me fet. (ll. 2338-2341)
>
> "Your brother has badly treated me; he well has the devil in his body, for I have done no wrong to him, and he does to me the worst that he can."[354]

The noun *forfait*, deriving from this sense of *forfaire*, can indicate a wrongful deed.[355] Hence in (69) Les Tresces the husband uses *forfait* to describe his (seemingly) wrongful accusation of adultery:

> "Dame, fait il, ne prenez pas
> A mon forfet ne a mes diz:
> Ge vos en cri por Dieu merciz!" (ll. 404-406)
>
> "Wife," he said, "Do not seize on my wrongdoing nor on my words: I beseech you, for God's sake, mercy!"

In addition to indicating "to transgress, to do wrong," the verb *forfaire* can also indicate "to forfeit, to merit because of an offense" and the noun *forfait* can likewise denote the punishment for a crime or something which is forfeited as punishment.[356] *Forfait* has the sense of "forfeit" in (1) Estormi, in which Jehan states, upon realizing that his hot-headed nephew has killed a fourth and innocent priest:

> "Par foi, or va plus malement,
> Que cil n'i avoit riens mesfet!

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[353]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[354]See also (58) L'Esquiriel l. 52; and (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, in which the wife uses the expression *soi forfere* when she apologizes to her husband for mistakenly ordering the household to beat him: "Forfete me sui durement" (l. 567: "I have committed a very serious fault").

[355]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[356]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

Mes teus compere le forfet
Qui n'i a pas mort deservie." (ll. 584-587)
"By faith, now it goes more badly, for this one did no wrong! But such a one will pay the forfeit who did not deserve death."

"Punishment" is indicated by *forfait* in (124) Trubert, in which the duke apologizes to the horse merchant who has mistakenly been beaten by the duke's men: "Et si me pose dou forfet/ Que ma mesniee vos ont fet" (ll. 991-992: "And so the punishment which my men have given you weighs on me").[357]

The adjective *forfait* in Old French describes a criminal or a person who does wrong.[358] The word appears in (64) Les Putains et les Lecheors, in which St. Michael characterizes the whores and debauchees as "une gent...forfete" (l. 27: "a wrong-doing people").

The terms with which *forfaire* and *forfait* are associated are other terms normally indicative of guilt, such as *anemis* (devil), *merci*, and *comparer*. Both in terms of its meaning and the context in which it appears, *forfaire* and *forfait* are plainly indicative of guilt.

4. Mesprendre

The verb *mesprendre* and the derivative noun *mesprison* occur 17 times in the fabliaux in total. The verb *mesprendre* can indicate "to make a mistake, to commit an error," like the English "mis-take" which translates it literally. However, *mesprendre* occurs in only one fabliau in this sense, in (12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille, in which the husband tells his wife, "un petit i mespreïtes" (l. 132: "you made a small mistake") when she accepted from her brother a coat as a gift for her husband. In all other uses of these words in the fabliaux, *mesprendre* indicates "to do wrong, to commit a fault, to transgress," and the noun *mesprison* indicates "wrong" or "fault."[359] Hence the son in (16) La Housse partie II who has turned his own father out of the house asks his father for forgiveness with the words, "j'ai trop mespris!" (l. 161: "I have committed a very serious offense"). The word *mesprison* refers to the crime committed by a robber rescued from the gallows in (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier, in which the *conteur* comments,

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[357]The editors of the NRCF mistakenly translate *forfet* as "tort."

[358]Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[359]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch. *Mesprison* can also indicate "error," as well as "bad treatment, outrage, injustice."

Por ce vos di tot en apert
Que son tens pert qui felon sert:
Raembez de forches larron
Quant il a fait sa mesprison,
Jamés jor ne vos savra gré... (ll. 67-71)

For this reason I tell you openly that he wastes his time who helps a felon: rescue a robber from the gallows, when he has committed his crime, (and) never will you know any gratitude...[360]

When followed by *vers*, *mesprendre* is used to denote wronging another person. Hence the lady in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk refuses to cuckold her husband because never has it happened that she so wronged her lord (l. 332: "Ke tant mespreist vers sun seingnur"). Similarly the dying priest in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre makes his bequest to the villagers from whom he has made his living, so that his soul may be freed from anything which he has *mesprit vers* them:

Et as povres de cele vilhe
Ai doné ausi, par saint Gilhe,
De bleis qui vaut plus de dis livres,
Por ce ke je soie delivres
De ce k'ai envers iaus mespris,
Car entor iaus mon vivre ai pris. (ll. 92-97)

And to the poor of this village I have also given, by Saint Giles, wheat worth more than 10 pounds, so that I may be delivered from (the penalty for) any wrongdoing I have done them, for from them I made my living.[361]

The contexts in which *mesprendre* and *mesprison* occur in the fabliaux are all indicative of guilt. The words occur with other terms from the vocabulary of guilt, such as *peché*, *mesfaire*, *penaunce*, *delivre*, *merci*, and *pardoner*.

5. Droit, Droiture, Droitoier, Tort

When they are used to refer to the violation of a norm or rule, *droit*, *droiture*, and *tort* can be indicative of the experience of guilt. However, these terms have a wide range of meanings and associations,[362] only some of which appertain to the experience of guilt.

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[360]See also (4) Auberee ll. 499, 536; (55) Le Pet au Vilain l. 21; (60) Le Chapelain l. 421; (69) Les Tresces I l. 63; II l. 145; (74) Le Sacristain III l. 312.

[361]See also (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 584.

[362]See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

Droit as an adverb indicates "directly," as in "Si vint droit a l'ostel s'amie" ("he went directly to the house of his friend").[363] As an adverb of time, it can indicate "straightway, immediately," as in "Voez li, sire, a fere droit" ("Vow to him, sir, to do it straightway.)"[364] As an adjective it can indicate "true" or "genuine," as in the expression "droit seignor"[365] or "droit enfers."[366] It can also indicate "fitting," "suitable," "proper," "just" or "right." In the fabliaux this sense appears most frequently in the expressions "ce est droit" or "drois est," expressions which are used to describe a variety of situations: the justness of the punishment or bad fortune suffered by the antagonists or wicked characters in the tales,[367] the justness of an accusation,[368] the rightness of sharing one's possessions with others with whom one has social ties or with whom one has made an agreement,[369] and the rightness of trying to carry out a friend's last bequest.[370] In (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux, for instance, the *conteur* uses the expression "ce fu droit" to characterize the outcome of the claim brought against the miller by his valet: "Cho fu droit que le honte en ot." (l. 390: "It was right that he had shame from it"). The expression *avoir droit* indicates "to be right" (as opposed to wrong). It is used in situations such as when, in (124) Trubert, Aude tells her mistress that she is right to sleep with Trubert in exchange for his multi-colored goat:

> ..."Vos avez droit,
> Que ce ne fet ne chaut ne froit,
> Que ja pis ne vos en sera..." (ll. 179-181)
> "...You are right, for this doesn't matter at all, for you will never be worse off for it..."[371]

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[363](8) La Bourse pleine de Sens l. 245.

[364](12) Le Chevalier a la Robe vermeille l. 300.

[365](103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 477.

[366](35) Gombert et les deus Clers l. 83.

[367](110) Le Meunier d'Arleux l. 372; (113) Le Chevalier a la Corbeille l. 261.

[368](96) Les trois Dames qui troverent un Vit l. 68; (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 448.

[369](30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue l. 88; (43) La Male Honte I l. 147; (74) Le Sacristain II l. 702.

[370](43) La Male Honte I l. 96.

[371]See also (61) Brifaut l. 45.

In all of these uses, *droit* is not directly indicative of guilt. While it describes what is just, fitting or right, it does not describe norms of behavior whose infraction incurs the experience of guilt. In the sense of "just, fitting or right" *droit* is typically contrasted with *tort*[372] or paired with *raison*.[373]

The noun *droit* has similar meanings.[374] It can indicate "right" in the sense of "that which is due someone." In (100) Le Vallet qui d'Aise a Malaise se met, for instance, it refers to a husband's sexual rights to his wife (l. 33). In (43) La Male Honte II it is used several times by the peasant to refer to the king's right (*droit*) to the *male Honte*, the purse (*male*) of his deceased companion Honte who has willed it to the king (ll. 87-91).

The noun *droit* can also have the sense of "justice." In the fabliaux it always refers to justice in an abstract sense, without reference to specific misdeeds, and so can not be considered indicative of guilt. It appears in this sense in the proverb, "Pouvres n'a droit se il ne done" ("The poor person has no justice, unless he takes it for himself"), a proverb appearing in two fabliau recounting cases of corrupt judges.[375] Similarly the peasant in (102) Le Prestre comporté who fears he and his wife may be wrongly accused of murder states,

> Maintes gens sont qui on sourdist,
> Ke li drois pas ne garandist,
> Car li drois en mains lius s'oublie. (ll. 461-463)
>
> Many men are accused who are not guaranteed by justice, for justice in many places is forgotten.

The devil in (55) Le Pet au Vilain who comes to collect the soul of a dying peasant is similarly said to maintain *droit* or justice: "Par cui li droiz iert maintenuz" (l. 28: "by whom justice was maintained").[376]

The expression *par droit* can indicate "by rights, by justice." In (43) La Male Honte II, for instance, the peasant tells the king that he ought to have "la male Honte" *par droit*: "La male Honte recevez,/ Que par droit avoir la devez (ll. 37-38: "Receive the *male Honte*, for by rights

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[372](74) Le Sacristain I ll. 44-45.

[373](102) Le Prestre comporté l. 448.

[374]See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[375](72) La Vieille qui oint la Palme au Chevalier l. 53 B; (96) Les trois Dames qui troverent un Vit l. 113.

[376]See also (32) Les trois Meschines ll. 124-125; (60) Le Chapelain l. 183.

you ought to have it"). Similarly the peasant in (39) Le Villain qui conquist Paradis par Plait tells St. Peter that he has more of a right to be in heaven than St. Peter himself, considering that St. Peter denied knowing Christ three times:

> Ne devés pas les cles avoir.
> Alés fors o les desloiaus!
> Mais je sui prodom et loiaus,
> S'i doi bien estre par droit conte!" (ll. 42-45)
>
> You ought not have the keys. Go outside with the other disloyal ones! But I am a loyal and good man, so I ought well to be [here], by justice!

The expression *à droit* likewise indicates "rightly" or "by rights" and is usually contrasted with *à tort*, as in (124) Trubert, in which Trubert, playing the naive bumpkin, states that he does not know whether the man on the crucifix was put to death rightly or wrongly: "Bien voi que c'est un home mort,/ Je ne sai a droit ou a tort" (ll. 91-92: "I well see it's a dead man, I don't know whether [put to death] rightly or wrongly").[377] Some measure of guilt is indicated by these expressions insofar as they refer to an abstract sense of what is right and how what happens in reality contravenes this. However, in all of these cases there is little emphasis placed on the fact that a transgression has occurred and no emphasis on personal responsibility. The element of guilt at best is slight.

Frequently *droit* in the fabliaux is used to indicate either having a case heard before a judge (*droit atendre*[378] or, more usually, *droit fere*[379]), making a judgement (*jugier à droit*,[380] *jugier le droit*[381]), or a decision arrived at by a court (*droit jugement*[382]). The verb *droitoier* is used to indicate the act of recounting one's actions before a court of justice.[383] With the

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[377]See also (1) Estormi l. 605; (2) Constant du Hamel l. 656; (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 1104; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 692.

[378](32) Les trois Meschines l. 96.

[379](60) Le Chapelain ll. 200, 249, 406, 422; (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier l. 33.

[380](23) Le Jugement des Cons l. 116.

[381](89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier l. 49.

[382](89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier l. 57. See also (32) Les trois Meschines l. 136.

[383](25) La Damoisele qui sonjoit l. 25. See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

exception of judgements made following a contest, as in (23) Le Jugement des Cons, these judgements do pertain to the experience of guilt. They entail people making claims for an injury suffered or losses endured, or appealing for judgement following an accusation of murder. While the word *droit* in itself is not indicative of guilt, then, when it is used to describe having a case heard in court, some harm done to the "Other" is always at issue and the experience of guilt is therefore indicated.

The noun *droit* is frequently used in the fabliaux to indicate the amends or recompense due a person for the harm he or she has suffered.[384] In the fabliaux, this does not indicate a fine resulting from a legal judgement, but rather vengeance taken or recompense freely given. In (81) Le Prestre teint, for instance, the priest, angered at the dyer's wife for having refused his advances and struck his go-between, tells the dyer and his wife that they should *fere le droit* to the go-between:

> -"Vostre fame fist grant orgeil,
> Qui bati ier ma marregliere
> Entre li et sa chamberiere:
> Clamee s'en est orendroit.
> Se vos volez fere le droit
> De la honte et du tort fet
> Que vostre fame li a fet,
> Ele le prendra volentiers. (ll. 206-213)

> Your wife, who, between herself and her chambermaid, beat my procuress, committed a very arrogant act: she made a claim concerning it, right away. If you want to amend the shame and wrong done by your wife, she (the procuress) will take it willingly.

Likewise in (74) Le Sacristain II, the conteur at the end of the tale comments that Guillaume now has his *droit* from the monk who thought to buy the affection of his wife:

> Ainsi ot Guillaumes son droit
> Du moine, qui par son avoir
> Cuida sa feme decevoir:
> Le bacon ot et les cent livres. (ll. 808-811)

> Thus Guillaume had his recompense from the monk, who thought to deceive his wife through his wealth: [Guillaume] had the ham and the 100 pounds.[385]

The context in these situations is clearly indicative of guilt: *droit* indicates recompense made so

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[384]Godefroy.

[385]See also (34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 220 A.

as to make amends for a wrong done.

The word *droiture* is nearly identical in meaning to *droit*.[386] Like *droit*, it can indicate recompense for a wrong done, as in the case of the priest in (77) Connebert who, forced to castrate himself by the husband whom he has cuckolded, receives no *droiture* when he lays claim against him in court: "Ainz cil n'en ot autre droiture" (l. 306: "And so he received no other recompense"). It can also indicate "justice" in the abstract sense and like *droit* is paired with *raison*, as in (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux in which the *conteur* concludes,

> Cho fu droit que le honte en ot,
> Car raisons ensaigne et droiture
> Que nus ne puet metre sa cure
> En male faire ni en mal dire
> Tous jors ne l'en soit siens le pire. (ll. 390-394)
>
> It was right that he had shame from it, for reason and justice teach
> that no one can put his efforts in doing and saying evil without it
> not being the worse for him always.[387]

Sometimes *droiture* seems to refer not so much to justice as to what is right or customary. In one manuscript of (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, for instance, the priest says it is not according to *droiture* if he allows a lay man to lodge with him:

> "Autre gent ont cest ostel pris
> Ne ce n'est pas droiture a prestre
> Que uilains hom gise en son estre." (ll. 72-74 H)
>
> Other men have been guests here, but it is not right for a priest that
> lay men should lodge in his home.

So too in (55) Le Pet au Vilain it is said to be contrary to reason and *droiture* that peasants lodge in heaven:

> Onques a Jhesucrit ne place
> Que vilainz ait habergerie
> Avec le fil sainte Marie,
> Car il n'est raisons ne droiture. (ll. 12-15)

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[386]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[387]See also (72) La Vieille qui oint la Palme au Chevalier, in which the *conteur* comments on the wickedness of "homes hautz" who do not strive for *droiture*:

> Leur sens et leur parole vendent:
> A nule droiture n'entendent,
> Chascuns a prendre s'abandonne... (ll. 53-55)
>
> They boast about their wisdom and speech: they strive for no justice,
> each one abandons himself to seizing...

See also (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 238.

Never has it pleased Christ that peasants have lodging with the son
of holy Mary, for it is not according to reason or justice.

The modern reader may be struck by the fact that neither *droit* nor *droiture* are used in the fabliaux to indicate specific behavioral norms whose violation leads to the experience of guilt. *Droit* and *droiture* do indicate justice in an abstract sense, however, and they also describe situations that are indicative of the experience of guilt when they refer to cases brought before a court of law or recompense for harm or injury.

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The adjective *tort* is used infrequently in the fabliaux. It can have the sense of "twisted, deformed," as in the descriptions of the old beggar woman in (37) La vieille Truande appearing in one manuscript (ll. 114, 123 A). It can also indicate "wrong,"[388] as in (74) Le Sacristain II, in which the prior comments that it would not be wrong if the sacristan paid for the misdeed of falling asleep in the abbey's latrine: "S'il le compaire n'est pas tort,/ Demain, quant serons en chapitre (ll. 428-429: "If he pays for it tomorrow, when the chapter is assembled, it's not wrong"). In this context, *ce n'est pas tort* is parallel to *ce est droit*, indicating something that is right or suitable, but not descriptive of the experience of guilt.

The noun *tort* appears with much greater frequency.[389] It often appears in the phrase *à tort* to indicate something that is done wrongly or unjustly, such as wrongful accusations of adultery or murder, or punishments wrongly given, as when characters are beaten or killed for crimes they have not committed.[390] A proverb featuring *à tort* in this sense concludes the fabliau (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne: "on fet a tort maint homme honte!" (l. 330: "Many men are wrongly shamed!"). When the wrongful accusation or punishment is the result of a mistake, misunderstanding, or misperception, the experience of guilt is not indicated. No one is responsible for the wrongful act, and so there is no guilt. In other fabliaux, however, a character

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[388]See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[389]See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[390]See (1) Estormi l. 588; (14) Aloul l. 423; (43) La Male Honte l. 150 A; (54) La Dame qui fist trois Tors entor le Moustier l. 162; (65) La Pucele qui voloit voler l. 94; (74) Le Sacristain II l. 744; (102) Le Prestre comporté ll. 459, 962; (124) Trubert ll. 1642, 2716; (126) Gonbaut l. 34. See also (20) Cele qui se fist foutre sor la Fosse de son Mari, in which the wife says she lives *à tort* (wrongly) because her husband is dead (l. 74).

is responsible for the wrongful accusation or punishment described by *à tort*, and in these situations the experience of guilt is indicated. The companion of the deceased sacristan in (74) Le Sacristain III, for instance, deems himself responsible for the man's death:

> "Compains," fait il, "A mout grant tort
> Et a mout grande desraison
> Vous ai ocis sanz mesprison." (ll. 310-312)
> "Companion," he said, "wrongly and contrary to reason have I killed you, without bad treatment (from you).[391]

When a person is responsible for the misdeed, often the phrase *à tort* is accompanied by the phrase *à pechié*. Hence the priest's mistress in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier denounces the priest for failing to extend hospitality to the knight free of charge, saying that he thought to share in the knight's possessions *à tort* and *au pechié*:

> Et cuidastes a la parsome
> Grant partie de son avoir
> A tort et au pechiet avoir... (ll. 1209-1211)
> And you thought in the end to have a good part of his possessions, wrongly and in sin...

Likewise the husband in (17) Les Braies au Cordelier, duped into thinking that his wife is innocent of adultery, says he almost killed her *à tort* and *par pechié*: "Par poi que n'ai ma feme ocise/ Par mon pechié et a grant tort!" (ll. 329-330: "I almost killed my wife, by my sin and wrongfully!").[392]

The expression *avoir tort* likewise sometimes indicates wrongful accusations or punishments wrongfully administered. Again, this is not indicative of the experience of guilt if no one is responsible for the mistake or injustice. When the tavernkeeper in (74) Le Sacristain II asks the thief why he killed the monk, the thief protests his innocence with the words, "vos avez tort:/ Onques, par toz sainz, nel toschai" (ll. 636-637: "You are wrong: never, by all the saints, did I touch him"). Likewise the noble man at the court of the king in (43) La Male Honte I tells the king that he would *avoir tort* if he put the peasant to death without knowing in full what the man's mysterious words mean:

> "Sire," fait il, "Vos avés tort
> Se le vilain aviez mort;
> Sachiés que est la male honte... (ll. 124-126)

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[391]See also (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 513, 1230.

[392]See also (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux l. 312.

"Sir," he said, "You are wrong, if you put the peasant to death.
Know what is the *male honte*..."[393]

Avoir tort can also describe being wrong in the sense of being mistaken or acting to one's disadvantage. In (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine, for instance, the fisherman tells his wife that she would be wrong (*avoir tort*) to say that his *vit* annoys her:

"Suer," fet il, "Tu aroies tort,
Il me seroit trop mescheü:
Se j'avoie le vit perdu,
Tu ne m'ameroies ja mes." (ll. 58-61)
"Sister," he said, "You would be wrong, it would be a great
misfortune to me: if I lost my *vit*, you would never love me."

He means that she would be mistaken, for he is certain that his sexual prowess is the main reason why she loves him. Likewise the baker Thomas in (74) Le Sacristain III says to Robin, his valet, that he is wrong (*tu as tort*) when he sleeps in: "Par Dieu, Robin, tu as grant tort,"/ Fait dans Thomas, "De dormir tant!" (ll. 487-488: "For God's sake, Robin, you are wrong to sleep so long!" said sir Thomas"). Robin is acting to his disadvantage, but is not wrong in the sense of being guilty. Likewise the prior in (74) Le Sacristain II says that he did wrong (l. 450: "avoie ge molt grant tort") when he had a fight with the sacristan. He does not view the fight as a transgression of a behavioral norm but fears it will be to his disadvantage because it will cause others to accuse him of the sacristan's murder. In these types of situations, *avoir tort* does not indicate guilt. To be mistaken or to act to one's disadvantage does not entail the element of personal responsibility and willful transgression that is key to the experience of guilt.

Most often, however, the expression *avoir tort* does indicate "to do wrong" in the sense of being guilty. The *conteur* in (60) Le Chapelain, for instance, says that neither of the two fisherman *a lo tort* regarding the murder of the priest: "Mes nus d'aus deus n'en a lo tort" (l. 265: "But neither of them was guilty"). The duchess in (124) Trubert tells Rosete's companion (actually Trubert in disguise) that she is acting contrary to acceptable norms when she tells her "vos avez tort:"

"Damoisele," dit la duchoise,
"Vos n'estes mie bien cortoise
Qui me gabez! Vos avez tort!" (ll. 2588-2590)
"Young lady," said the duchess, "You are not at all *courtoise* to
joke with me! You are wrong!"

The cleric in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk tells the object of his unrequited

[393]See also (69) Les Tresces II l. 348; (126) Gonbaut l. 31.

affections that she is committing a wrongful act ("vus avez tort") by refusing him her love. He explains that her refusal will result in harm to him and offense to God because it will result in his death:

> "Certes, ma dame, vus avez tort!
> Ne soliez bien Deu amer?
> E volez ore un chaitif tuer!" (ll. 310-312)
> "Certainly, my lady, you are wrong! Aren't you accustomed to love God? And now you want to kill a miserable wretch!"

The expression *avoir tort vers* likewise conveys the sense of harm done to the "Other." In (37) La vieille Truande, for instance, the old beggar woman complains to the noble man that her son is abandoning her by saying, "Sire, enuers moi a mout grant tort" (l. 138: "Sir, he does me great wrong").[394]

The expression *faire tort* is likewise usually indicative of the experience of guilt, describing an act freely taken that harms the "Other." In (124) Trubert, the expression *faire de tort* occurs with the verb *amender* to describe King Golias's desire to make peace with the duke: "De quan que vos a fet de tort/ Or vos en velt feire l'amende" (ll. 2063-2064: "Whatever wrong he has done you, now he wants to make amends for it").[395]

Interestingly, *tort* in the expression *faire tort* is sometimes paired with words from the vocabulary of shame. The loyal wife in (81) Le Prestre teint, for instance, refuses the advances of the priest by stating she would never do such *tort*, *vilenie*, or *hontage* to her lord:

> La bone dame dist ja n'iert
> Qu'ele face a son mari tort
> -S'el en devoit prendre la mort-,
> Ne vilanie ne hontage... (ll. 45-48)
> The good woman said it will never be that she do wrong to her husband -even if she were to die for it-, nor villainy nor shame..."

Similarly, the priest in (81) Le Prestre teint uses the expression *faire du tort et de la honte* (l. 211) to describe the wife's action in striking the priest's procuress, as quoted in the example above. Shame and guilt are intertwined here in that doing wrong causes shame to the victim: to cuckold one's husband brings him shame, and to strike a person causes that person shame.

The noun *tort* sometimes occurs independent of the expressions *avoir tort* and *faire tort*.

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[394]See also (73) Le Magnien qui foti la Dame l. 91; (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame l. 142; (83) La Dame escoillee l. 256 E; (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier l. 39; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 338; (124) Trubert ll. 698, 843, 1597.

[395]See also (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 268 M; (124) Trubert l. 288.

Again, it typically indicates the experience of guilt.[396] In (102) Le Prestre comporté, for instance, the noun *tort* occurs with several other terms indicative of the experience of guilt: *repentir*, *ahan*, and *quite*:

> "Hé, Dieus," dist il, "Se il me loist
> De cest grant tort fait repentir,
> Grans ahans en vorrai soufrir,
> Pour tant que jou quites en soie." (ll. 518-521)
> "Alas, God," he said, "If it were permitted to me to repent of this great wrong, great torment would it be worthwhile for me to suffer so that I would be quit of it."

In (74) Le Sacristain I, the noun *tort* is paired with *pechié*: "Mais gardés vous qu'il ne soit mors,/ Car ce seroit peciés et tors." (ll. 95-96: "But make sure you do not kill him, for this would be sin and a wrong").

As noted above, *tort* is contrasted with *droit* in several fabliaux, either in the expression *à droit ou à tort* (rightly or wrongly) or in the expression *avoir droit, avoir tort* (to be right, to be wrong). The noun *tort* alone occurs with *droit* in (60) Le Chapelain, in which one of the characters, accused by his companion of murder, announces his intention to lay claim against him in turn with the words: "En coure lo tort et lo droit" (l. 183: "Let right and wrong take their course in this"). In this instance *tort* again indicates guilt, the infraction of *droit* which will be righted through trial.

Unlike *droit*, then, *tort* often denotes the experience of guilt. While it occasionally denotes that which is wrong, unjust, mistaken, or contrary to one's own advantage, for the most part it refers to the violation of norms of behavior and offenses or harm done to the "Other." If a lowering of status, either of the perpetrator or the "Other," results from the wrong done, then *tort* can mesh with the experience of shame.

6. The Devil

The concept of sin is often expressed in the fabliaux by reference to the devil. When the devil seizes a soul at death, the implication is obviously that the deceased has led a sinful life.[397] A more interesting simile for wrongdoing in the fabliaux is reference to how the devil dwells in

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[396]In addition to the examples cited, see also (60) Le Chapelain l. 196, where the phrase *par tort* is used to describe an act of trickery and theft.

[397]See (55) Le Pet au Vilain; (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur.

characters, constrains them, lays traps for them, or otherwise leads them to do wrong. In (56) Frere Denise, for instance, the devil is said to "contraint et semont et argue" the friar who seduces a young girl who wants to enter his order:

> Li freres, que li anemis
> Contraint et semont et argue,
> Out grant joie de sa venue. (ll. 142-144)
>
> The friar, whom the devil constrains and counsels and presses upon, had great joy at her arrival.

The son in (16) La Housse partie I who turns his father out of the house explains afterwards that the devil and sin ensnared him: "C'estoit anemis et pechié/ Qui me cuide avoir aguetié" (ll. 373-374: "It was the devil and sin which thought to have ensnared me"). The husband in (13) Le Vilain Mire who beats his wife each day as a way of ensuring her fidelity likewise blames his actions on the devil:

> A sa fame cheï aus peiz
> Et li pria: "Por Dieu, merci!
> Sachiez, ce me fist anemi,
> Qui me fist fere tel desroi." (ll. 95-97.1)
>
> He fell at his wife's feet and beseeched her: "My lady, for God's sake, mercy! Know that the devil made me commit such a culpable act."[398]

Often when one character sees another doing something wrong, they call that character the devil. Hence when Trubert in the fabliaux of the same name [(124)] is about to beat the duke, the duke says, "Coment deable, estes vos tes?/ Ja ne vos ai ge riens forfet!" (ll. 801-802: "What, devil, are you such a person? I have never done any wrong to you!"). Similarly when one of the clerics in (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers II announces to the other that he is going to speak with the miller's daughter in the middle of the night (and, plainly, attempt to seduce her), the other responds by calling him a devil: "Qu'est ce, deable, es tu desvé?" (l. 180: "What is this, devil, are you crazy?").[399]

We saw above that sin (*pechié*) is often presented as an active agent that causes characters to do wrong. The descriptions of the devil playing this role are of the same ilk. Other

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[398]See also (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur ll. 40-41; (4) Auberee l. 265; (20) Cele qui se fist foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari l. 61; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 1101-1102; (124) Trubert l. 2339.

[399]See also (32) Les trois Meschines l. 64; (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 268.

nouns are also portrayed as active agents inciting characters to do wrong, such as love,[400] wickedness,[401] and poverty.[402] In (1) Estormi, the disloyalty of the *crupes* and *rains* (literally, buttocks and kidneys, ll. 32-33) are what make the three priests proposition the wife. Interestingly, the classic sins or vices are rarely presented in this role in the fabliaux.[403] There are only a few examples. In (109) Une seule Fame qui a son Cors servoit cent Chevaliers de tous Poins, the prostitute of the castle who incites one of the knights to kill her rival attributes her actions to jealousy, hatred and envy:

> "Deul que de ma compeingne avoie,
> Pource c'on li faisoit plus joie
> Que moi, si com il me sambloit,
> Et de vos mieus ammee estoit.
> Pour soupeçon de jalousie,
> Par haÿne traicte d'envie,
> Pour ce la haioie si forment
> Qu'il ne me chaut de quel torment
> Des or mais mourir me faciez!" (ll. 165-173)

> I was sad about my companion, because she was treated better than me, so it seemed to me, and she was more beloved by you. On account of suspicion deriving from jealously, through hatred deriving from envy, for this I hated her so much that I did not care with what torment you would make me die!

The fabliau (71) Le Couvoiteus et l'Envieus begins with a diatribe about the evil wrought by covetousness and envy, again presenting these vices as active agents of wrongdoing:

> Que covoitise si est tieus
> Qu'ele fait maint home honteus:
> Covoitise preste a usures
> Et fait recouper les mesures
> Por covoiter d'avoir plus aise.
> Envie si est plus malvaise,

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[400](117) La Nonete ll. 126-127. Love as an active agent inciting the lover to love is of course a commonplace in medieval literature.

[401](52) Le Vilain au Buffet ll. 100-101.

[402](38) Estula l. 25.

[403]Cf. Lorçin 103-104. Lorçin notes that while the vices (and more rarely, the virtues) are not often used to characterize the characters in the fabliaux, still they play a major role in the action. The list of vices that can be extracted from the fabliaux is more similar to the vices described in theRoman de la Rose (hate, felony, villainy, covetousness, avarice, envy, sorrow, old age, hypocrisy, poverty) than to those described in thirteenth century moral theology.

Qu'ele va tot le monte coitant... (ll. 19-25)

For covetousness is such that she shames many men: covetousness lends at usurious rates and cheats with weights and measures out of greed for more wealth. Envy is more wicked, for she presses all the world...

Manuscript B elaborates further:

[Couoitise fait] Homes en batailles perir,
Nes Deus fait ele relanquir.
Couetoise fait l'ome prendre
L'autrui, don ele lo fait pandre,
Et il en cuide avoir plus aise. (ll. 21-25 B)

Covetousness makes men die in battle, she even makes them relinquish God. Covetousness makes one man seize another, on account of which she makes him hang, and he thought to have more wealth from it.

We saw above that *pechié* is sometimes equated with misfortune. The devil is likewise said to cause misfortune in the fabliaux. In (1) Estormi, for instance, Jehan says to himself, in noting how the fourth and innocent priest was killed, that the devil tricks and seizes men.

"Par foi, or va plus malement,
Que cil n'i avoit riens mesfet!
Mes teus compere le forfet
Qui n'i a pas mort deservie.
A mout grant tort perdi la vie
Li prestres qu'Estormis tua,
Mes deables grant vertu a
De genz engingnier et sousprendre." (ll. 584-591)

"By faith, now it goes more badly, for this one did no wrong! But such a one pays the price who has not deserved death for it. The priest whom Estormi killed lost his life wrongly, but the devil has great power in tricking and seizing men."[404]

The devil, and not any particular sin which this priest has committed, has brought him this misfortune.

Such references to the devil as the bringer of misfortune are relatively rare, however. When the devil is not an actual character in the tale, references to the devil are usually indications of wrongdoing and hence the experience of guilt. When the devil seizes a person's soul or incites a person to do wrong, then the experience of guilt is indicated.

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[404]See also (2) Constant du Hamel ll. 613.15, 613.22-24.

7. Other References to Misdeeds

Occasionally the context alone indicates that a character has willfully committed a misdeed. Although it is rare that such a situation is not described with any other terms from the vocabulary of guilt, still the situation can be regarded as indicative of the experience of guilt when the misdeed is explicit. The priest in (68) L'Evesque qui beneï le Con, for instance, is described as willfully maintaining a concubine contrary to the explicit orders of the bishop:

> Et a l'evesque mout en poise,
> Si li a par mainte foiz dit
> Et deveé et contredit
> Que il l'ostast de sa maison.
> Li prestes par bele raison
> Li dist que sofrir ne s'an puet.
> "Par noz ordres faire l'estuet,"
> Dit li evesques araumant... (ll. 24-31)

> And it weighed greatly on the bishop, so he said to him many times, and forbade him and disputed with him, that he turn her out of his house. The priest argued through beautiful reason that one could endure it (keeping a concubine). "By our command you must do it (turn her out)," said the bishop promptly...

Similarly the young woman who is raped in (25) La Damoisele qui sonjoit makes it clear in her words of reproof to her attacker that he has violated the moral code and caused her harm:

> Qui vos fist lo parc peçoier
> Sanz congié, qant je me dormoie?
> Si Deus me doint mes que je revoie
> Pere ne mere que je aie!
> Trop estes de male menaie
> Qui si m'avez despucelee:
> Jamais ne serai mariee. (ll. 26-32)

> Who made you break apart the enclosure without my permission, while I slept? May God allow me never again to see the father and mother I have! You have greatly abused your power, you who have thus deflowered me: I will never be married![405]

To commit a misdeed, to be responsible for the misdeed, and to harm another in the process are all clear indicators of the experience of guilt.

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[405]The young woman begins her verbal assault on her attacker by telling him that he should go to the bishop of Paris: "Devant l'evesque de Paris/ Vous covanra a droitoier!" (ll. 24-25: "You must go before the bishop of Paris to recount your actions before his court"). The ecclesiastical court of a bishop was responsible for dealing with serious sins such as rape. As discussed below, references to bringing a case before a judge can be considered indicative of the experience of guilt.

C. Terms Describing Harm or Injury to the "Other"

One of the essential components of the experience of guilt is the disruption of the guilty person's relationship with the "Other" through the act of injuring or in some other way giving offense to the "Other." Hence situations in which one character is explicitly described as hurting or injuring another can be considered indicative of the experience of guilt. In the fabliaux this can be indicated by such terms as *damage*, *grever*, and *anuier*, or can be inferred from the situation alone. Even when the terms denoting injury or offense to another are used, however, it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether in fact guilt is at play. To injure or harm a person was not only a misdeed that could indicate the experience of guilt; it could also constitute a way to shame them. Shame was inherent in defeat, and it also was a key component in punishment. We saw above that *faire honte*, *faire lait* and *laidengier* could indicate "to punish," *avoir honte* could indicate "to be punished," *faire vilenie* could indicate "to beat" or "to injure," and *honte* could indicate "injury" or "death." As well, causing injury to a person could result in affronted honor. The terms *damage*, *grever*, and *anuier* in fact occur far more often in a context suggestive of shame rather than guilt. To ascertain whether shame or guilt is operative in a given instance, the context as always must remain the guide. When other terms from the vocabulary of guilt are present, when there is a clear disruption in the relationship to the "Other" as a result of the offense, and the disruption is subsequently compensated for either through forgiveness or through punishment, then the experience of guilt is indicated.

The number of instances in the fabliaux in which the situation alone indicates guilt, without the use of terms such as *damage*, *grever* and *anuier* or any other terms from the vocabulary of guilt, are relatively few. The ignorant peasant in (106) Le fol Vilain who loses his wife's *con* in the waters provides one example. He describes to a passer-by how his wife entrusted the *con* to his care:

> Je sui trestos li plus dolens
> Qui soit dementres qu'a Meulens:
> J'avoie une pucele prisse,
> Preut et cortoise et bien aprisse,
> S'avoit ça sen con commandet;
> Or l'avoit par moi remandet,
> Si l'ai en ceste eve perdut. (ll. 335-341)

I am the most sorrowful person there is between here and Meulens: I have married a young girl, valiant and *courtoise* and well brought up; she made her *con* come here; now she has sent it back by me, and I have lost it in this water.

When he returns home, he falls at his wife's feet, the posture used for begging for mercy, and clearly shows his awareness of how he has harmed her:

> Se feme vait au piet caïr,
> Puis dist: "Molt me poés haïr,
> Car j'ai perdut vo Conebert... (ll. 353-355)
>
> He fell at his wife's feet, then said: "You can hate me a lot, for I lost your *Conebert*..."

The unrequited lovers in the fabliaux who attempt to win over loyal married women by showing how the women's refusal kills them are likewise drawing on the experience of guilt. The sacristan in (74) Le Sacristain III, for example, tells the object of his affection, "Quant vous m'escondisiez dou tot,/ Morir vouroie, si m'est tart!" (ll. 60-61: "When you refuse me everything, it seems late to me that I die!"). The cleric in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk takes this tack to the extreme, telling the lady he loves that she will be guilty of his death if she does not return his love:

> "Ne soliez bien Deu amer?
> E volez ore un chaitif tuer!
> Si jeo meur pur vostre amur,
> Jeo requer nostre creatur
> Ke il prenge de vus vengance.
> Kant faire me poez aleggance,
> Si issi morir me lessez,
> Apert homicide serrez!" (ll. 311-318)
>
> "Are you not accustomed to loving God? And now you want to kill a wretch! If I die for your love, I will request our Creator to take vengeance on you. When you are able to alleviate my condition, if you let me die here, you will be an open murderess!"[406]

In several instances characters are explicitly said not to care about how they have harmed another. These characters can be regarded as being guilty or in the state of guilt, for by their actions they have intentionally harmed the "Other," but they do not feel the sentiment of guilt. One of the more striking examples of this occurs in (56) Frere Denise, in which a young girl runs away without any thought for the grief she thereby causes her mother. The *conteur* carefully contrasts the young girl's insensitivity with the deep sorrow her mother experiences:

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[406]See also (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons, in which the three fairies about the wrong the squire has done to them in stealing their clothes (ll. 129-147); and (117)La Nonete, in which the prioress tells her companions that they must act to free the little nun from prison because, among other reasons, she may kill herself out of despair (ll. 96-99).

Molt fu a mal aise la mere,
Qui ne savoit ou sa fille ere:
Grant doleur en son cuer demainne
Trestoz les jors de la semainne.
En plorant regrete sa fille,
Mes cele n'i done une bille,
Ainz pence de li esloignier. (ll. 127-132)

The mother was in great distress, for she did not know where her daughter was: she has great sorrow in her heart all the days of the week. Weeping, she mourns her daughter, but she (the daughter) doesn't care a marble, but rather thinks about distancing herself from her.

Similarly in (54) La Dame qui fist trois Tors entor le Moustier, the wife is described as loving the priest regardless of whose heart may grieve over it:

Mout l'amoit cil et ele lui,
Et si ne laissast por nelui
Qu'ele ne feïst son voloir,
Cui qu'en deüst li cuers doloir. (ll. 21-24)

He greatly loved her and she him, and she would cease from doing her will for no one, regardless of who had a sorrowful heart from it.

Likewise in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier the knight, in the course of wreaking his vengeance on the priest, takes the virginity of the priest's niece, ignoring the girl's sorrow and pain:

Or puet mener et duel et rage
Gille, qui est depucelee:
Moult en a grant dolour menee
Et dolousé icele nuit.
Or est mout joians du deduit
Li chevalier, et mout se paine
Icele, qui mout ot de paine
Por la cose qu'el n'a aprise.
Li chevalier tant le justice
Que par cinc fois ses boins en fait,
Cui que soit biel ne cui soit lait... (ll. 653-663)

Now can Gille, who is deflowered, grieve and rage; she was very dolorous and sorrowful this night. Now the knight is very joyful from the peasure, and she greatly labored, who suffered greatly from something to which she was not accustomed. The knight so mistreated her that he did his deed five times, regardless of to whom it seemed good nor for whom it was displeasing...[407]

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[407]See also ll. 458-459, in which the knight orders his squire to obtain the priest's niece for his pleasure, "Qui qui le tiengne a non savoir,/ Qui qu'en pleurt ne qui k'en ait joie!" (ll. 458-459:

The knight is not as bad as the priest, however, who is repeatedly said to be concerned only about himself. At the beginning of the fabliau, the *conteur* describes him as caring only about himself, his mistress, and his niece:

> ...d'omme nul ne li chaloit
> Fors que de li et de s'amie,
> Qu'il avoit biele et eschavie,
> Et de sa nieche qu'il tenoit
> En son ostel ... (ll. 48-52)
>
> He cared about no one except himself, his mistress, who was beautiful and well-made, and his niece who lived in his house...

A peasant in the village also describes the priest as caring only about himself:

> Et si set bien au grant besoing
> Homme servir, ses coses sauves.
> Et si ne prise pas deus mauves
> Homme ne femme fors que lui:
> Tant est fel et de put anui! (ll. 102-106)
>
> And he knows well, when there is a great need, how to serve men well without using anything of his own. And he does not esteem any man or woman more than two seagulls other than himself: he is so felonious and odious!

When the knight later sleeps with the priest's mistress, the priest is said to be upset only because of the shame he thereby suffers, and not because of the humiliation of his mistress:

> Li prestres a duel et offense
> Por le viutanche et por l'anui
> Qu'il a por soi, nient por autrui... (ll. 939-941)
>
> The priest grieved and was offended on account of the shame and pain he endured, but not for that suffered by anyone else...

Concerned only about himself, the priest is plainly to be understood as guilty.

Phrases similar to "Cui soit il biel ne cui soit lait" often occur in descriptions of characters engaging in misdeeds. One of the brothers in (38) Estula, for instance, cuts a cabbage from his wealthy neighbor's garden, "Qui que il poist ne cui il griet" (l. 30: "Whoever it weighed upon or grieved"), and the companion of the sacristan in (74) Le Sacristain III tells the sacristan that he drinks too much each night, and that "Petit vous est cui il anuit/ Que tant

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"Whoever may deem it mad, whoever cries or is glad because of it"); ll. 691-692, in which the knight is described as greatly laboring and exerting himself, whether it be rightly or wrongly: "...mout se paine et se travaille,/ Ou soit a droit ou soit a tort;" and l. 708, in which the knight requests that the squire fetch the priest's mistress in order to serve his pleasure, "cui qu'il desplaise" ("whomever it may displease").

demorez a sonner!" (ll.300-301: "It matters little to you who you annoy by delaying so long in sounding the bells"). Not feeling guilty when their actions do in fact harm others, not caring about others in a society which so strongly valued relationships, the characters in these situations are plainly in the state of guilt.

In some fabliaux characters are reminded of how their actions harm the person who feeds or takes care of them. In (14) Aloul, for instance, the old serving woman Hersent reminds the cowherds how the mistress of the household gives them cheese and eggs, and then tells them that they should for that reason not treat her in a shameful manner by suspecting her of adultery:

> "Ma dame n'a soing de hontage,
> Ainz est certes mout bone dame;
> Bon renon a de preude fame,
> Et vous li fetes tel anui!
> Mes se j'estoie com de li,
> Ceenz n'avriez oés ne fromage,
> S'avriez restoré le domage:
> Des pois mengerez et du pain!" (ll. 396-403)

My lady does not care for shameful ways, rather she is a very good lady; she has a good reputation as a *preude* woman, and you do her such harm! But if I was her, you would not have eggs or cheese in here, until you had compensated her for the harm you do: you would eat peas and bread!"

Similarly the king in (43) La Male Honte I urges his men to beat the peasant who appears to be insulting him by shouting, "Ou sunt mi baille/ Et cil qui menjuent mon pain,/ Quant ne me tuent cel vilain?" (ll. 79-81: "Where are my subjects and those who eat my bread, when they do not kill this peasant?").[408] They respond by falling on the man immediately. To be fed by someone was to incur a debt of loyalty to them, and to be reminded of how one is disloyal is to be made to feel guilty.

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408 The son in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force tells his mother that she should keep quiet about the fact that he has a mistress because he still feeds her. This is likely not just an attempt to point out to her that he is meeting her physical requirements, but an attempt to make her feel guilty for saying shameful things to him:

> "De quoi me menez vos dangier,
> Se du pein avez a mengier,
> De mon potage et de mes pois?
> Encor est ce desor mon pois,
> Car vos m'avez dit meinte honte!" (ll. 23-29)

"Why do you make difficulties for me, if you have bread to eat, and my soup and my peas? Yet even that is against my will, for you have said much shame to me!"

Among the terms that indicate injury or offense to the "Other," the noun *damage*, meaning "damage," "harm," or "injury,"[409] would seem to be a fairly obvious indicator of guilt. In only two instances, however, does the word clearly indicate the experience of guilt. In (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de Noier, the man whose eye was accidentally put out by another in the course of rescuing him from drowning states in court that he has suffered *damage*. The formal complaint in court supports the interpretation of *damage* as an offense in the context of guilt:

> "Seignor, fait il, "Ge sui plaintis
> De cest preudome, qui tierz dis
> Me feri d'un croq par ostrage:
> L'ueil me creva, s'en ai domage." (ll. 29-32)
> "Lord," he says, "I bring a complaint against this good man, who three days ago by an act of outrage struck me with a crook: he took out my eye, and so I have suffered harm."

In (69) Les Tresces, the woman posing as the wife tells her husband that she forgives him for having done her *damage* by wrongly accusing her of adultery:

> "Que vos m'auez ci fait domage
> Que vos m'auez ci reprochié,
> Vos pardoin ie tot lo pechié..." (ll. 272-274 B)
> "That you have done me harm here, that you have reproached me here, I forgive you all the sin..."

In virtually every other instance in which the word *damage* occurs, however, the context is suggestive of shame.[410] *Damage* is often coupled with *honte* to indicate the shame inherent in such things as being propositioned, as in the case of Constant's wife in (2) Constant du Hamel who tells the forester who propositions her: "Ge ne vos ferai ja servise:/ N'i avrai honte ne domaige!" (ll. 115-116: "I will never do you service: I will not suffer the shame or harm!"). In (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, *damage* is used to refer to the harm suffered by a noble lineage when its members marry into the peasant class for the sake of money. In the opening lines, the *conteur* laments:

> Ensi lo bon lignage aville,

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[409]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[410]The word *domage* appearing in the harangue made by the old maidservant Hersent in (14) Aloul to the shepherds, cited just above (ll. 396-403), could be interpreted as indicative either of shame or guilt. The shepherds have inflicted *domage* on the lady by being disloyal and assaulting her reputation, something which can be compensated (*restoré*) and therefore is indicative of guilt, but they have also caused her shame.

Et dechiet tot et va a honte,
Que li chastelain et li conte
Se marient bas por avoir;
Si doivent grant honte avoir
Et grant domage, si ont il:
Li chevalier mauvais et vil
Et coart issent de tel gent,
Qui miauz aiment or et argent
Que il ne font chevalerie.
Ensi est largesce perie,
Ensi dechiet enor et pris! (ll. 24-35)

And so a good lineage is debased and completely decays and goes to shame when chatelain and count marry off [their women] for money; and so they ought to suffer much shame and harm, and so they do: bad and vile knights issue from such a people, knights who love gold and silver more than chivalry. Thus does largesse perish, thus are honor and reputation ruined.

In other instances *damage* is used to indicate the physical harm brought upon characters as the result of some wrong they have done; again, *damage* in this context is often coupled with *honte*. In (75) Le Prestre qui manja Mores, for instance, the *conteur* states in the moral that *damage* and *honte* comes to those who say what they think:

Por cest flabel poez savoir
Que cil ne fait mie savoir
Qui tot son pensé dit et conte,
Quar maint domaige en vient et honte
A mainte gent, ce est la voire,
Ainsi com il fist au provoire! (ll. 91-96)

By this fabliau you can know that he does not at all act wisely who says and recounts everything he thinks, for much harm and shame come from it to many men, this is the truth, as they did to the priest.

Similarly the duke's nephew in (124) Trubert is hanged, causing much sorrow and *domage*: "Li niés au seigneur est penduz,/ De quoi il est duel et domage" (ll. 2043-2044: "The nephew of the lord was hanged, on account of which there was much sorrow and harm").[411] In indicating the

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411 See also (69) Les Tresces l. 251; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 99. The word *dame*, virtually identical in meaning to *damage*, is used in (77) Connebert to refer to the harm suffered by the priest who is forced to castrate himself (l. 14), an injury which is also referred to as "honte et enui" (l. 6). *Dame* refers to harm which comes about as the result of taking vengeance in (53) Le sot Chevalier, in which it is said that the knights would have taken vengeance *à dame* for the injuries they suffered had it not been for the intervention of the mother-in-law: "Mais il en fuscent bien vengiet/ A grant dolor et a grant dame" (ll. 310-311: "But they would have taken

physical harm or injury that comes about as the result of shameful punishment or the moral harm suffered in being shamed, *damage* refers to shame, not guilt.

The verb *anuier*, meaning "to harm, hurt; to grieve, offend; to be bothersome, to annoy,"[412] and the noun *enui*, meaning "punishment, penalty, unpleasantness, pain, torment,"[413] sometimes indicate the harm one character intentionally does to another and hence the experience of guilt. Often other terms from the vocabulary of guilt accompany this usage. The wife in (17) Les Braies au Cordelier who apologizes to her husband for crying out in alarm when he comes home unexpectedly states that she has *fait enui* to him and then asks his pardon with the words *pardonez moi*:

> -"Sire, fait ele, "Or m'esbahis
> De ce qu'ançois ne vos connui;
> Ge vos en ait fait grant enui,
> Ge m'en tieg ore mout por fole ... (ll. 171-174)
> ...Beau sire,
> Por Dieu, pardonez moi vostre ire! (ll.178-179)
>
> "Sir," she says, "Now I am astonished that I did not recognize you before. I have done you much harm, I consider myself much a fool... Dear sir, for God's sake, forgive me your wrath!

When the priest in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier is informed by the squire that the knight wishes to sleep with him, all in accordance with the terms of the agreement which the priest made with the knight earlier, the priest responds, "Amis, forment m'enulliés,/ Vous et vos sires a grant tort" (ll. 1129-1130: "Friend, you greatly grieve me, you and your lord, very wrongly").[414] In the milder sense of "to annoy," *anuier* can also indicate the experience of guilt. In version III of (74) Le Sacristain, cited above, the companion of the sacristan admonishes the sacristan for failing to ring the bells for matins by referring to how his actions *anuit* the other monks:

> "Par Dieu, dit il, "Dan soucretain,
> Vous bevez tant chaucune nuit,
> Petit vous est cui il anuit

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vengeance well, [causing] great sorrow and harm"). The phrase "Ce est domage," identical in sense to the modern French "c'est dommage," appears in (58) L'Esquiriel l. 173.

412Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch. *S'anuier* in the sense of "to be bored" does not occur in the fabliaux.

413Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch. *Anui* in the sense of "boredom" does not occur in the fabliaux.

414See also (50) Les deus Chevaus l. 70.

Que tant demorez a sonner! (ll. 298-301)
"By God," he said, "Sir sacristan, you drink so much each night that it matters little to you whom you annoy by delaying so long in ringing the bells."[415]

Sometimes *anui* and *anuier* are used to describe the harm that comes to a person as the result of being punished for some wrongdoing. In this sense as well, these words indicate the experience of guilt. Hence the peasant in (102) Le Prestre comporté who fears he and his wife will be accused of the murder of the priest says,

"...nous n'i avons nule coupe.
Mais on ne puet sans anui vivre:
Faisons tant que soions delivre
Entreus que on faire le puet. (ll. 450-453)
"...we are not guilty. But one is not able to live without harm [even though he/she is innocent]: let us act so that we are quit of it, while we are still able.

Likewise the wife in (85) Les quatres Prestres fears she will have *anui* from the priest whom her husband has killed: "Si dout que je n'en aie anui" (l. 32: "I am afraid that I will suffer from it [the murder]").[416] Even less formal punishment is described as *anui*. The lover who is trapped in bed with the husband of the woman he loves in (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier believes he will not escape *sanz anui* (l. 143), and the outraged wife in (81) Le Prestre teint who curses the priest's go-between states, "Por poi que ne vos faz anui,/ Qui que le deüst amender!" (ll. 170-171: "But for a little do I not do you harm, regardless of who must make amends for it!").[417] In (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier, *anui* borders on revenge. The man who has

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[415]See also (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux, in which the miller fears he may *anuit* his valet Mouset by spending so much time with the young girl:

Li mauniers crient Mouset n'anuit,
Qui l'atent seant a la piere;
Ses demoures forment li grieve. (ll. 228-230)
The miller feared he would annoy Mouset, who waited for him, sitting on the rock; his delay greatly troubled him.

Likely the miller's concern is not born out of concern for the annoyance thereby caused the valet, but because he wants the valet's pig, which the valet has offered to the miller in exchange for the opportunity to sleep with the girl. The words *anuier*, *anui*, and *anuieus* indicate annoyance or the act of annoying another person, but outside the context of guilt, in (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche l. 100; (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine l. 55; (42) Le Fevre de Creil l. 100; (59) Le Foteor l. 153; (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'amor de sa Dame l. 122.

[416]See also (19) La Borgoise d'Orliens l. 256.

[417]See also (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville l. 470.

lost an eye in the course of being saved from drowning decides to make a claim against his rescuer "Por faire lui mal et enui" (l. 22: "To harm and annoy him"). In three fabliaux, characters ascribe some misfortune to the sins which *nuit* them.[418]

Similar to *domage*, *anuier* and its derivatives are often associated with the shame that comes from being punished for something that one has done wrong. Hence the prior in (102) Le Prestre comporté fears he will suffer "honte et anuis et lais" (l. 961) if he is accused of murder. The squire in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier insists that he can not disobey the knight's orders, for otherwise he will suffer *tort, anui, lais du cors*, and *honte*, all ways of saying that he will endure buggery at the hands of the knight if he fails to obey his orders:

> "A grant anui, a felonnie
> Me feroit tort et lais du cors
> Mesires, qui est grans et fors,
> Et grant honte me vorroit faire." (ll. 1267-1270)
>
> "My lord, who is big and strong, would do me wrong, with great affliction and feloniously, and would injure me in body, and much shame would he make me undergo."

The priest in (77) Connebert who undergoes what can be regarded as a severe form of punishment when he is forced to castrate himself by the husband whom he has cuckolded is said to have "honte et enui" (l. 6) done to him by the husband.[419] As we saw above in our discussion of the various senses of the word *honte*, there is a close link between shame and punishment.

Anui can indicate shame alone, outside the context of anything that can be regarded as punishment. Often *anui* is paired with shame words such as *lait* or, most frequently, *honte*, to describe the result of being cuckolded, insulted, or propositioned. The cuckolded priest in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, for instance, is sorrowful "Por le viutanche et por l'anui/ Qu'il a por soi..." (ll. 940-941: "On account of the vileness and harm which he himself suffered..."). The king who is repeatedly insulted by the peasant in (43) La Male Honte I says he has done him *honte* and *anui*:

> "Tu m'en avras fait mainte honte
> En ma cort et maint grant ennui,
> Ne sai quantes foïes hui!" (ll. 132-134)

418(51) Les deus Changeors l. 106; (74) Le Sacristain III l. 405; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 844.

419See also (43) La Male Honte l. 95 F.

"You will have done me much shame in my court and many great wrongs I don't know how many times today!"[420]

Anuier and its derivatives can also refer to harm or injury that occurs outside the context of shame and guilt. The monks in the monastery in (102) Le Prestre comporté, for instance, refuse to make a claim against the bishop who has apparently killed a priest while visiting their abbey because they know the bishop, a powerful man, could *nuire* them and destroy their monastery: "Car bien sevent qu'il lor puet nuire/ Et lor abeïe destruire" (ll. 1095-1096: "For they well knew that he could harm them and destroy their abbey").[421]

Anuier and its derivatives can also refer to sorrow. Yedlicka in his study of the vocabulary of repentance and remorse identifies several instances in medieval French moral and didactic literature in which *annui*, *anuié*, and *anoier* are used to describe the anxiety of the soul and regret for sin.[422] In the fabliaux, the words describe more profane situations: the *anoi* in the heart of the cleric in (119) Le Clerc qui fu repus derriere l'Escrin who sees his lady love dallying with another man: "Au cuer en avoit grant anoi (l. 68: "In his heart he had much sorrow"); and the anguish of the wicked seneschal who finds himself the object of mocking laughter in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet: "Ce qu'il les voit rire li nuit" (l. 230: "That he saw them laugh distressed him").[423] While *anuier* and its derivatives can indicate the experience of guilt by referring to offense to the "Other" and punishment for wrongdoing, they do not indicate the feeling of guilt in the fabliaux.

The word *grever* in the fabliaux has several senses: to torment, crush, harm, or hurt; to

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420See also (19) La Borgoise d'Orliens l. 196; (31) Les quatre Sohais Saint Martin l. 200 (a reference to cuckolding); (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait l. 51; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 1204, 1214 (with reference to sodomy and cuckolding). Cf. (120) Le Sentier battu, in which the *conteur* warns of the foolishness of insulting someone regarding something "Dont il ont anuy et vergoigne" (l. 3: "About which they have anxiety and embarrassment"). Cf. also (14) Aloul, in which Hersent tells the cowherds they do *anui* to their mistress by believing her husband's accusation of adultery (l. 399).

421See also (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier l. 76; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 82, 134; (124) Trubert l. 2723.

422Yedlicka 307-308.

423See also (119) Le Clerc qui fu repus derriere l'Escrin l. 72.

distress or burden; to be wearisome or disagreeable; and to annoy or bother.[424] In the first two senses, *grever* indicates harm done to another character and so can be considered indicative of the experience of guilt. Hence in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, the wife confesses that she has *grevé* her husband through her numerous adulterous affairs: "Quar mon seignor ai grevé si/ Qu'a poi que ne l'ai tout honi" (ll. 189-190): "For I have so harmed my lord that I have almost completely shamed him"). The ignorant husband in (66) La Sorisete des Etopes apologizes to his wife's *con* by saying that he did not mean to *grever* it: "Que ne vos voil hui mais grever" (l. 211: "For I did not want to hurt you today").[425] Even in the milder sense of "to distress," a sense of harm done to another, indicative of the experience of guilt, can be evident. Hence the monk in (50) Les deus Chevaus apologizes to the peasant for making fun of his horse with the words, "Ainc ne le dis por vostre anui/ Ne por vous de riens agrever!" (ll. 70-71: "I never said it to annoy you nor to distress you in any way!"). The sacristan in version II of (74) Le Sacristain similarly tells the wife that her delay in responding to his proposition "me grieve" (l. 250).[426] Interestingly, in all of these uses, although a sense of an aggrieved other is evident, no other terms from the vocabulary of guilt are ever used. It is interesting also to note that when characters are *grevé*, they seek restitution not through the sanctions of guilt, such as punishment, fines or appeal to the court system, but through exacting vengeance, part of the cycle of affronted honor that constitutes the experience of shame. Hence the woman in (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier whose lover insults her during a love-making session takes vengeance because he "li greva:" "mes li greva,/ Que la dame puis s'en venja" (ll. 34-35: "But he harmed her, so the lady took vengeance"). The man who lost his eye in (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier reasons that he did not *grevé* the man who put out his eye, and so he will do him a bad turn (a form of exacting vengeance) by making a claim against him in court:

> "Cist vilains m'a mon ueil crevé,
> Et ge ne l'ai de riens grevé:
> Ge m'en irai clamer de lui
> Por faire lui mal et enui." (ll. 19-22)

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[424]It has other meanings as well: "to burden with taxes; to overthrow; to accuse or to blame severely;" and, in the reflexive, "to exhaust oneself or be fatigued." See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[425]See also (124) Trubert l. 816.

[426]See also (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux l. 230; (124) Trubert l. 2006.

"This peasant has put out my eye, and I have not harmed him at all:
I will make a claim against him in order to harm and annoy him."

In the sense of "to annoy," the word *grever* does not indicate the experience of guilt. In (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche, for instance, the valet serving the provost at banquet is greatly annoyed ("trop li grevoit" [l. 100]) by the provost's furred cap. The provost does not intentionally seek to annoy the valet with the cap and no guilt is present.

Yedlicka in his study of the vocabulary of repentance and remorse in Old French moral and didactic literature notes that *grever* and *grevance* are sometimes applied to the soul or conscience to describe the troubling of the soul,[427] but this usage does not occur in the fabliaux. In a related usage, though, *grever* is used in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse to describe the affliction brought upon the body as punishment for one's sins. In her deathbed confession, the wife admits to having slept with her husband's nephew, "Dont li miens cors est molt grevez/ Et la moie ame en grant freor" (ll. 164-165: "On account of which my body is greatly distressed and my soul in great fright"). This likely reflects the belief that sickness was in itself punishment for one's sins[428] and so can also be understood as an indicator of the experience of guilt.

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While the words *damage*, *anuier*, and *grever* and their derivatives can all be used to describe the offense to the "Other" which is part of the experience of guilt, then, all of these same terms are also used, and more frequently, to describe the experience of shame: either the shame that is inherent in such things as being cuckolded, propositioned, insulted, or marrying down, or the shame that comes from being punished for some wrongdoing. The offense done to the "Other" sometimes gives rise to a call for vengeance, which is also part of the experience of shame.

D. Terms Describing the Feeling of Guilt: Se Repentir, Peser, Encombrer, Entechier, Orde

Relatively few terms are used in the fabliaux to express feelings of regret over having

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427Yedlicka 310.

428Cf. Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law 20; Delumeau 252, 301.

committed a wrongful deed or offended the "Other," and only *se repentir* and *peser* are used with any frequency. The verb *se repentir*, deriving from the Latin *poenitere*, could indicate either feelings of repentance and remorse over some wrongful act which one has committed, or mere regret not pertaining to the experience of guilt.[429] When it indicated feelings of repentance and remorse, *se repentir* in the fabliaux is typically accompanied by other terms from the vocabulary of guilt. The wife's deathbed confession in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, one of the most detailed examples of the feeling of guilt in the fabliaux, uses virtually all of the terms from the vocabulary of guilt. The wife twice uses the word *se repentir* in her lamentations:

> "Moie coupe, je m'en repent. ..." (l. 132)
> Tant fis que je o lui pechai,
> Et que cinc ainz, je cuit, l'amai:
> Or m'en repent vers Dieu, aïe! (ll. 171-173)
> *Mea culpa*, I repent. ... I went so far that I sinned with him, and for five years, I think, I loved him: now I repent before God, help!

In no other fabliaux does *se repentir* appear in the context of the sacrament of penance. In several it is used to describe the feelings of remorse a character has after committing a misdeed. It is interesting to note that, in these instances, while the term is often accompanied by other terms from the vocabulary of guilt and seems to be an indicator of guilt, it is usually not accompanied by the tears and lamentation that Jean-Charles Payen identifies as typical of the literary presentation of contritionism in Old French literature.[430] In (125) Le Moigne, for instance, the monk uses the word *se repentir* after his sexual arousal has caused him to ride off the road into a marsh, to the amusement of some near-by butchers: "De la folie me repent/ Qui m'est hui cest jour avenue" (ll. 76-77: "I repent of the folly which happened to me today"). The description of remorse lacks tears and lamentation likewise in (85) Les quatres Prestres, in which the peasant husband is said to *se repentir* when he kills the three priests who propositioned his wife:

> Tuit troi sont mort en un moment.
> Li païsant s'en repentist
> Tot meintenant, se il poïst... (ll. 22-24)
> All three died in an instant. The peasant repented at once, it weighed on him...[431]

429See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

430Payen, Le motif du repentir.

431See also (117) La Nonete l. 187.

The brevity of these particular fabliaux may explain the lack of lamentation, of course. However, it is only in one fabliau, (74) Le Sacristain II, and only in one particular manuscript of this fabliau, manuscript B, that the word *se repentir* appears outside the context of the sacrament of penance accompanied by other expressions typical of the language of contritionism. After her husband kills the monk, Ydoine cries and curses the day she met the monk. She is then said to *se repentir*:

> Guillaumes panse Ydoine plore
> Et si maldit lo ior et l'ore
> Q'ele onques s'acointa do moine
> Mout en cuide trauail et poine
> De ce c'ot fait mout se repant
> Car esploitié a malemant. (ll. 400-405 B)
>
> William thinks and Ydoine cries, and curses the day and the hour that she ever met the monk. Much she fears travail and pain from it. She greatly repents what she did, for she acted badly.

Yedlicka in his examination of the vocabulary of repentance and remorse in Old French moral and didactic literature notes that *répentance* and its various other grammatical forms (including *se repentir*) have as their basic sense a turning away from sin and a turning towards God.[432] In the fabliaux this sense is largely absent. Even when tears and lamentations accompany the use of *se repentir*, as in (74) Le Sacristain II, imminent punishment appears to be paramount in the minds of the perpetrators.[433]

Often *se repentir* is used in the context of apologies for misdeeds. In this context as well, it indicates the experience of guilt. Hence the newlywed wife in (83) La Dame escoillee apologizes to her husband for contradicting his wishes regarding their wedding feast with the words, "Or m'en repent, por Dieu, merci!" (l. 362: "Now I repent, for God's sake, mercy!"). The peasant in (13) Le Vilain Mire who beats his wife each day apologizes to her by saying:

> ..."Por Deu, merci!
> Tot ce m'a fet fere anemi.
> De ce que batue uos ai
> Et de quant que mesfet uos ai
> J'en sui dolenz et repentans." (ll. 99-103 C)

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[432]Yedlicka 112 ff.

[433]See below, Chapter Four, for a detailed discussion of the effectiveness of the sanctions of guilt.

"For God's sake, mercy! The devil made me do all this. I am very sorrowful and repentant for beating you and whatever wrong I have done to you."

Likewise the *jongleur* in (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur apologizes to Saint Peter for calling him a cheater by saying, "Sire, ge dis grant vilenie,/ Or me repent de ma folie" (ll. 283-284: "Sir, I said a very villainous thing, now I repent of my folly").

As a noun, *repentir* indicates repentance, remorse or regret.[434] The context again is the best guide in ascertaining whether guilt is indicated. The word clearly indicates repentance, and hence the experience of guilt, in (102) Le Prestre comporté when the peasant says he would willingly suffer greatly in order to be quit of the murder of the priest, if he were permitted to *repentir*:

"Hé, Dieus," dist il, "Se il me loist
De cest grant tort fait repentir,
Grans ahans en vorrai soufrir,
Pour tant que jou quites en soie." (ll. 518-521)

"Alas, God," he said, "If I were permitted to do repentance for this great wrong, I would willingly suffer great torment so that I may be quit of this."

Although he does not actually shed tears, his lamentation clearly indicates the experience of guilt and has the hallmarks of contritionism. This is the only example in the fabliaux of the noun occurring in a contritionist context, however. *Repentir* indicates mere regret and does not pertain to the experience of guilt in (13) Le Vilain Mire, in which the peasant plots how to keep his newlywed wife faithful. He comments that to *repentir* after cuckolding has taken place does no good. He intends to take preventive action first:

"Hé, las! Cheitif!" dist le vilein,
"Or ne me sai ge consellier,
Que repentir n'i a mestier!" (ll. 50-52)

"Alas! Wretch!" said the peasant, "I don't know how to advise myself, for regret (after the fact of cuckolding) does no good!"

The verb and the noun *repentir* appear several times in other fabliaux in similar expressions describing how being regretful after the fact does no good. Typical is the proverb cited at the end of (96) Les trois Dames qui troverent un Vit, in which the *conteur* remarks, "cil se repent trop tart/ Qui se repent quant a perdu" (ll. 122-123: "He repents too late, who repents after he has

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[434]Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch. It could also indicate "withdrawal from, estrangement."

suffered a loss").[435] In these instances, *repentir* clearly indicates more a sense of regret than repentance.

The verb *se repentir* clearly indicates "to regret" rather than "to repent" when the person concerned has done nothing wrong, as in the case of the duke in (124) Trubert who regrets the agreement he made with Trubert whereby the duke is to receive Trubert's multi-colored goat in exchange for four hairs from the duke's buttocks. Trubert severely injures the duke in the process of extracting the first hair, which prompts the duke to say, "N'i touchiez plus, je men repent/ Car trop i tienent durement/ Cil poil... (ll. 285-287: "Do not touch me anymore, I regret it, for this hair holds on too strongly..."). In other instances, *se repentir* clearly indicates regret over having acted to one's own disadvantage. The lovelorn squire in (93) Guillaume au Faucon who, after seven years of waiting, finally asks the object of his affections for her love and is then met with a sound rejection, subsequently *se repent* (l. 307) of having said anything. Clearly he is experiencing regret over having acted to his own disadvantage.[436]

The verb *se repentir* can also indicate "to leave off, to abstain from."[437] In only two fabliaux does *repentir* appear in this sense, which is unrelated to the experience of guilt.[438]

The verb *peser* appears with much greater frequency than *se repentir*. In its basic sense as "to weigh upon," it can denote a range of feelings,[439] but only sometimes does it indicate the experience of guilt. Often it denotes "to displease, to be disagreeable," as for example when the cuckolded husband in (77) Connebert says it weighs upon him that he is allowing the priest to cuckold him: "Je l'ai sofert, ce poise mi" (l. 79: "I have allowed it, this is displeasing to me").[440]

435See also (47) Les trois Boçus l. 222; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 749-750.

436See also (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 594.

437Godefroy; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

438(43) La Male Honte II l. 120; (124) Trubert l. 1994.

439The various Old French dictionaries define it as "to weigh; to weigh out; to buy, ransom or redeem; to be heavy; to consider, think over; to weigh upon; to press upon; to be troublesome, harmful, displeasing; to worry, to cause anxiety or uneasiness." See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

440See also (1) Estormi l. 213; (10) Jouglet l. 128; (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons ll. 148, 386; (26) La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre III l. 116 D; (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine l. 64; (51) Les deus Changeors l. 116; (68) L'Evesque qui beneï le Con l. 24; (69) Les Tresces I l. 63; (74) Le Sacristain III l. 239; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 868, 909; (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne l. 165; (124) Trubert ll. 1626, 2315.

In other instances *peser* has more the sense of "to distress" or "to worry," as when it is said to weigh upon the priest's mistress in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville that she has fought with him, and she then fears he may harm her:

> Et quant la dame iré le voit,
> Forment li poise qu'el avoit
> Tencié ne estrivé a lui:
> Molt crient qu'il ne li face anui... (ll. 467-470)
>
> When the lady sees him angry, it greatly weighs on her that she had argued and quarreled with him: she greatly fears that he may do her harm...[441]

Peser can also convey a sense of regret. The wife in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, for instance, tells her husband that it weighs upon her that she did not tell him, during the course of her confession, that she slept with all the dogs in the country:

> Mout me poise que je ne dis
> Que tuit li cien de cest païs
> Le me fesoient nuit et jor! (ll. 255-257)
>
> It greatly weighs on me that I did not say that all the dogs in this country did it to me night and day![442]

Her regret is not guilt, of course, but only regret for not having acted otherwise.[443] Only when *peser* refers to how one's own actions weigh upon oneself because of the harm they have brought upon another does the word indicate the experience of guilt. *Peser* conveys this sense in only a few fabliaux. In (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, the wife says it would weigh upon her (l. 356: "ceo peisereit me") if her husband's squire died because she refused him her love:

> "De cet homme ai grant pité:
> Si jeo ne faz sa volenté,
> Morra de duel, si com jeo crei;
> E si il morsist, ceo peisereit mei." (ll. 353-356)
>
> "I have great pity on this man: if I do not do his will, he will die from grief, I believe; and if he did, it would weigh on me."

Likewise in (124) Trubert the duke says the harm his household has wrought upon the merchant

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441 See also (1) Estormi l. 323; (21) Les Perdris l. 97; (36) La Saineresse l. 35; (37) La vieille Truande l. 124; (56) Frere Denise l. 204; (74) Le Sacristain II l. 81; (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers l. 10 B/ 12C; (95) Le Prestre et la Dame l. 34; (102) Le Prestre comporté l. 244; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 223, 233, 240, 286, 1172; (124) Trubert l. 2573.

442 See also (51) Les deus Changeors ll. 108-109; (124) Trubert l. 548.

443 Yedlicka, pp. 310-312, notes that *peser* can indicate feelings of anxiety, inquietude, regret and remorse.

weighs upon him:

> Et si me pose dou forfet
> Que ma mesniee vos ont fet;
> Mes je sui prez de l'amender..." (ll. 991-993)
> And the wrong which my household has done to you weighs on me; but I am ready to make amends for it..."

Other terms from the vocabulary of guilt usually accompany *peser* in this usage, as in this example from (124) Trubert, or in the case of the husband in (85) Les quatres Prestres who, as noted in the example quoted above, repents of having killed the three priests, something which is also said to weigh upon him: "Li païsant s'en repentist/ Tot meintenant, se il poïst" (ll. 23-24: The peasant repented right away, and it weighed upon him").

The word *peser* can indicate the experience of guilt also when it is used to describe to the perpetrator how his or her actions have harmed another. In (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, for instance, an old spice merchant points out to the adulterous husband how his actions weigh on someone. In manuscript A the merchant elaborates, stating that his actions make his wife cry:

> "Tu as amie, si en poise
> Par auenture a ta moillier.
> Et si t'en voi les ieus moillier.
> N'as tu amie?" "Oil voir, sire." (ll. 170-172 A)
> "You have a mistress: perchance it weighs on your wife. And you see her eyes moisten over it. Do you not have a mistress?" "Yes, truly, sir."

So too in (124) Trubert the nephew points out to his attackers that what they do weighs on him:

> Batu m'avez, ce poise moi!
> Li dus ne set pas ce desroi:
> Mes oncles ja vos feroit pendre,
> Nus ne vos en porroit desfendre. (ll. 1626-1629)
> You have beat me up, this weighs on me. The duke does not know about this wrong: my uncle would make you hang (if he did know), none of you would be able to defend yourselves.

That the duke would punish them for this "*desroi*" further emphasizes the element of guilt.

The image of sin as a burden or weight was a commonplace in medieval French didactic literature.[444] The word *encombrer*, meaning "to burden, to hinder,"[445] is used with reference to sin only rarely in the fabliaux, and then not to describe how the sinner feels weighed down or

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[444]Yedlicka 55, 181, 308-312.

[445]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

burdened by his sin, but rather to characterize sin as an active agent. We saw in the example quoted above from (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame that the death of the knight in the tournament is described as being the result of sin running on and encumbering the knights at the tournament: "...pechié/ Lor corut sor et encombrier,/ Que mort i ot un chavalier. (ll. 86-88: "...sin ran up to them and encumbered them, for a knight died"). Similarly the forester in (2) Constant du Hamel uses *encombrer* to describe the active power of sin when he accuses Constant of cutting down some trees: ""Vostre pechié vos encombra/ Quant nostre bois nos essartastes..." (ll. 327-328: "Your sin encumbered you when you cleared our woods...").[446] Only in (74) Le Sacristain I does *encombrer* convey the feeling of guilt. Thinking that he has killed the sacristan, the prior laments,

> "E, Dius, j'ai mort le secretain:
> Le pecié n'ert ja espani! (ll. 244-245)
> Dius, com m'a encombré peciés!
> Or sui jou de murdre enteciés. (ll. 249-250)
>
> Alas, God, I have killed the sacristan. The sin will never be expiated! ... God, how sin has encumbered me! Now I am stained with [the sin of] murder.

The image of staining evoked by the prior was in fact a common one in medieval French moral and didactic literature. Often penance or confession was presented as an inner cleansing and sin as filth, a swamp, and something which stains the heart.[447] In the fabliaux, however, this imagery is very rare. The word *entechier* could indicate "to stain," "to be endowed with" (either good or bad qualities), and "to be attacked or affected by some evil" (including sin).[448] It appears in only one other fabliau in the context of guilt, to describe the state rather than the feeling of guilt. In (60) Le Chapelain, the provost asks Bernart, the man accused of theft and murder, not to deny if he is stained (*entechiez*) with the offense:

> Bernart, cist preudon vos apele
> D'une chose qui n'est pas bele,
> Ainz est mout lede, ce sachiez!
> Se vos en iestes entechiez,

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[446]See also (74) Le Sacristain II, in which one of the thieves uses *encombrer* with reference to the devil to describe a misfortune which has befallen them: "Or s'est deable en guise mis/ De moine por nos encombrer" (ll. 642-643: "Now it is a devil in the guise of a monk, in order to encumber us"). This is similar to the use of *pechié* to describe misfortunes.

[447]Yedlicka 12, 19, 58, 82, 160-164, 173, 180, 184, 233-234, 422.

[448]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

Ne vos en escondites ja! (ll. 208-212)
Bernard, this good man makes a claim against you regarding something which is not pleasing, but rather is very odious, know this! If you are stained with this, do not deny it!

In (56) Frere Denise, the lady denounces before her lord the friar who has seduced a young girl, telling him he has led a false and *orde* (filthy[449]) life:

"Fauz papelars, fauz ypocrite,
Fauce vie meneiz et orde!
Qui vos pendroit a votre corde
Qui est en tant de leuz noee,
Il avroit fait bone jornee! (ll. 244-248)
Sanctimonious fake, false hypocrite, you lead a false and filthy life! He who would hang you by your cord, which is knotted in many places, would do a good day's work!

As we saw above, many of the terms from the vocabulary of shame could indicate filth or the act of soiling, such as *honir*, *vil*, *conchier*, *soillier*, *laidure*, *lait* and *laidement*. However, there appears to be virtually no overlap between the vocabulary of shame and guilt with respect to terms indicating soiling, staining or filth. The terms indicating soiling or filth in the context of guilt, *orde* and *entechier*, are not used in the context of shame. The word *lait* occurs with *entechier* in the example just cited from (60) Le Chapelain, but, in that it is contrasted with *bel*, it conveys more the sense of "displeasing" rather than "filthy."

E. Accusation and Judgement

We saw above that several terms denoting the act of accusing someone of wrongdoing, both within and outside of a formal legal context, can denote the experience of guilt. *Encuser* and *reprendre* are virtually always used in the context of guilt, while *blasmer* alone and in the phrase "*blasmer et choser*" can indicate the experience of guilt when the context emphasizes the act of accusation itself or the fault committed. The expression *faire droit* and *droit atendre* indicate having a case heard before a court. Other terms that indicate formal recourse to the judiciary system may also be considered indicative of guilt. In that they imply that a wrongful act has been committed for which punishment is merited, the experience of guilt is indicated.

Often in the fabliaux lodging a complaint in the court system is described with terms indicating only that one speaks to a person in authority or that a person in authority knows of the wrongdoing. Hence in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force the mother threatens her son that she

[449]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

will go tell the bishop (l. 40: "li conterai") about how badly he treats her; when she does so, the bishop then sets a date on which her son will be summoned to appear before the court. Similarly Gui, the fisherman in (60) Le Chapelain who suspects his companion of robbing him of a rich find, tells him,

> Si en volez avoir ma part:
> Ainz lou savroit, se Dieus me gart,
> La contesse, et tuit li baron... (ll. 146-148)
> Thus you want to have my share: and, so may God protect me, the countess and all her barons will know it...[450]

In (2) Constant du Hamel, the peasant Constant is accused of three separate incidents which could result in a court appearance. In all three cases, he promises to pay a sum to his accuser to win their support and be quit of the charges. There is throughout a sense that his accusers are perverting justice; although the charges are serious, the process is informal and the accusations amount to nothing more than extortion. First he is accused by the priest of having married his *commère*. He offers the priest seven pounds, to give to the archbishop or deacon in order to be quit of the charge: "donez du mien/ A l'arcevesque ou au doien,/ Por faire moi quite clamer" (ll. 222-224: "Give from my goods to the archbishop or the deacon, to have me be quit of this"). Next he is accused by the provost of having stolen his lord's wheat. The provost puts him in chains. Constant offers him 10 pounds, in exchange for which the provost will act as his "chanpion" (l. 299) before his lord. In the final incident, Constant is accused by the forester of stealing wood from his lord's forest. He tells the forester that if the forester took him to court, he (the forester) would realize little profit: "Se vos me menez a la cort,/ N'i avroiz mie grant profit" (ll. 355-356: "If you took me to court, you would not profit much"). Constant offers him 100 sous, and the forester readily accepts the bribe.

In other fabliaux more formal terms and processes appear. *Plaintis*, referring either to a complaint or a complainant,[451] is used in (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de Noier by the man who has lost his eye who begins his complaint to the mayor of the commune with the words, "ge sui plaintis/ De cest preudome... (ll. 29-30: I lodge a complaint against this good man..."). In (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force the bishop summons the irresponsible son to

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450See also (76) La Plantez, in which the *conteur* uses the word "reconte" to describe what the tavernkeeper says in court (l. 113); and (124) Trubert, who speaks (l. 2700: "parler") to the king in response to the charges of the priest.

451Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

appear in his court on a day in which he "tenir ses ples" (l. 70). He tells the priest against whom he is making a judgement that he does not want to hear any more "parrolle, pleinte ne clamour" (l. 135) regarding how he treats his mother. In (60) Le Chapelain, the verb *apeler,* which could indicate "to accuse, to appeal to a tribunal for judgement,"[452] is used twice to describe accusation. Bernard tells Gui he will defend himself against the charge of theft, "Se vos m'en ossez apeler!" (l. 180: "If you dare to call me this!"), and the provost, in summoning Bernard to hear his side of the story, tells him, "Bernart, cist preudon vos apele/ D'une chose qui n'est pas bele" (ll. 208-209: "Bernard, this good man accuses you of something which is not nice").

The expression *mettre sur* or *sus*, which can mean "to accuse, to charge, to reproach,"[453] is used to describe formal accusations of wrongdoing. In (102) Le Prestre comporté, the monks do not dare *mettre sur* the bishop who, to all appearances, has just beaten one of their monks to death: "il est lor maistre et lor sire,/ Si ne li oserent sus metre" (ll. 1092-1093: "He is their master and lord, so they would not dare accuse him"). In (2) Constant du Hamel, Constant reacts violently when he hears himself accused (l. 278: "s'ot metre sore") of theft, and tells the provost that he is being wrongly accused (*mis sur*) through envy: "Sire prevoz, c'est par envie/ Que l'en m'a mis sore tel huevre" (ll. 287-288: "Sir provost, it is through envy that one has accused me of such a deed"). In (60) Le Chapelain the expression describes the shepherdess being accused by the provost, who, along with a huge throng, has just witnessed the dead priest's wounds bleed when the shepherdess passed by, supposedly an indicator that she is the murderess. She tells the provost that she will appeal for justice to the countess if he charges her (*mettre sur*) with anything: "Se vos en metez rien sor moi,/ Droit feré devant la contesse!" (ll. 405-406: "If you charge me with anything, I will appeal to the countess!").

The expressions *se clamer*, *s'aller clamer*, and *se faire clamor* are the only terms used with any frequency to indicate the act of making a complaint, the first step in launching a legal process.[454] The priest forced to emasculate himself in (77) Connebert afterwards seeks recompense for his injury and "s'an ala clamer a cort" (l. 298: "went to make a claim in court").

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[452]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[453]Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[454]*Clamer* is defined as "to cry, proclaim; to declare, recognize;" and, in the sense discussed here, "to lay a complaint, to bring a charge against, to pursue in court, to reclaim one's rights or a possession." *Clamor* indicates "cry, complaint;" "claim;" "reputation, renown;" or "an action, suit or claim before the court." See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

The priest in (81) Le Prestre teint states that his procuress "clamee s'en est" (l. 209) regarding an assault on her person, without specifying to whom she has made her complaint. The phrase "clamé me sui" is used by the offended parties in (60) Le Chapelain (l. 189) and (46) La Coille noire (l. 88) to describe lodging a complaint with the provost and the bishop, respectively. Guillaume in (74) Le Sacristain II, having successfully disposed of the body of the sacristan, is said never to have been *clamé* regarding the murder: "Einsi fu Guillaumes delivres,/ Que onques puis clamez n'en fu" (ll. 812-813: "Thus was Guillaume free, for he never had a complaint made against him regarding it").[455] In (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville the word *clamer* is used outside of the context of a court proceeding but with the same meaning that it would have in it. The maidservant tells her mistress in a dispute over the ownership of a sheepskin that she will make a complaint to the priest, prompting her mistress to curse her:

> "Je atendré tant que vendra
> Mon sire, adont si m'en irai:
> De vos a lui me clamerai."
> -"Voi, clameras? Put bufarde... (ll. 360-363)
> "I will wait until my lord comes, then I will go: I will make a complaint to him about you." -"You will complain? Stinking glutton..."

The use of the word *clamer* here suggests the same sort of appeal for judgement to a person in authority as we see in other fabliaux in which a formal accusation is made before a lord or bishop.

At the risk of stating the obvious, what links all of these expressions used to indicate the act of making a complaint before a person of judicial authority is the concept of verbalization. In France up until and continuing through the thirteenth century, legal actions even in what we would regard as cases of criminal law were initiated by the offended party. The legal process began with a formal and public accusation of wrongdoing before a person of judicial authority.[456] Hence the formal act of accusation was a key component in trials and, when described in the fabliaux, can be considered indicative of the experience of guilt.

References to judgement can also be considered indicative of the experience of guilt if

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[455]See also (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force l. 48; (46) La Coille noire ll. 33, 88; (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier l. 21.

[456]See Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law, ch. 1; R. W. Kaeuper, War, Justice and Public Order. England and France in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 159; Lavoie, "Justice, morale et sexualité" 12-14.

they entail judging whether a person ought to compensate a wronged party or judging what compensation is due. The verb *jugier* and noun *jugement* are used in these senses.[457] In some instances, though, they indicate only the act of making a decision or making up one's mind. In such contexts, they plainly do not refer to guilt.[458] In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, *jugier* refers more to shame than guilt when the priest states that he does not want the shame of being cuckolded to be judged to him:

> "Mieus vauroie ma destre cuisse
> Avoir en deus tronchons brisie,
> Que teus hontes me fus jugie..." (ll. 737-739)
>
> I would prefer that my right leg be broken in two pieces than that such shame be judged to me...

In other fabliaux, such as (23) Le Jugement des Cons (ll. 115, 125, 155, 163) and (118) Le Jugement (ll. 42, 49), *jugement* and *jugier* are used to refer to judging the winner in verbal contests. Again, the experience of guilt is not indicated. In other fabliaux, *jugier* or *jugement* refer to making a judicial decision but there is no aggressor or victim. In (23) Le Jugement des Cons, for instance, the father states that no ecclesiastical court would ever judge (l. 52: "ne jugeroit") that one man could marry all three of his daughters. In instances in which there is an aggressor and a victim, however, *jugier* or *jugement* do indicate the experience of guilt. Hence in (32) Les trois Meschines, the audience is asked to *jugier* which of the girls in the fabliau was responsible for causing the beauty powder to fly away:

> Seignors et dames qui savez
> De droit, jugiez sanz delaier
> Qui doit ceste poudre paier... (ll. 124-126)
>
> Lords and ladies who know *droit*, judge without delay who ought to pay for this powder...

In (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait, *jugement* describes the judgement of souls. St.

457The Old French dictionaries define *jugier* as "to judge, pronounce judgement; to condemn; to award, entrust; to decide; to approve; to announce, notify, indicate; to establish the price." *Jugement* is defined as "judgement, the act of judging; sentence; court action; choice; arbitration; assessment; jurisdiction." See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

458See for example (23) Le Jugement des Cons, in which "le jugemenz" (l. 102) is used to refer to the uncle making a decision about which of his nieces will marry their beloved; and (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, in which *jugier* is used in combination with *cuidier* to describe the wife's decision to have an affair: "Par sei iugie e quide,/ Si il meurt, que ele seit homicide" (ll. 341-342: "By herself [the lady] judged and thought that if he died, she would be a murderess"). See previous note for definitions of *jugier* and *jugement*.

Peter tells the soul of a peasant who has come to heaven, unescorted, "Ceanz n'a nul hebergement/ Se il ne l'a par iugement" (ll. 27-28 C: No one is taken in here unless it is by judgement"). In (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier, the court is described as perplexed over how to *jugier le droit* (l. 49) in the case of a man who has lodged a complaint against another who put out his eye in the process of rescuing him from drowning. The *jugement* (ll. 57, 60), made at the suggestion of a fool at the court, is part decision and part sentence: that compensation should be paid only if the complainant is thrown into the water again and can be saved without having his other eye put out. *Jugement* is equated with a judicial sentence and punishment in (74) Le Sacristain III when Guillaume, carrying away the body of the priest whom he has killed, hears voices and fears he will come *à jugement*:

> "Helas," fait il, "Or sai je bien
> Que je sui pris et retenus,
> Et a mon jugement venus." (ll. 360-362)
> "Alas," he says, "Now I know well that I am seized and detained,
> and come to my judgement."

The fabliaux featuring judgement scenes do not usually involve judgement concerning questions of guilt. This occurs in only one fabliaux, (60) Le Chapelain, in which guilt is assessed through trial by ordeal.[459] Judgements in the fabliaux are usually concerned instead with assessing the punishment for a wrong which all acknowledge has been committed.[460] Indeed, as we have just seen, *jugier* and *jugement* when used in a legal context in the fabliaux were more often synonymous with passing a sentence, not assessing guilt.

The legal system presented in the fabliaux is largely the older Germanic system of trial by combat or ordeal. Under Germanic law, lodging a complaint in court was a way to end the cycle

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[459](5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse can be considered a parody of a trial by ordeal. In this fabliaux the trial is designed not to assess who is guilty but who should wear the breeches in the household.

[460]See Brent A. Pitts, "Truth-Seeking Discourse in the Old French Fabliaux," Medievalia et Humanistica 15 (1987): 112-114 for a listing of the fabliaux which contain judgment scenes. For a discussion of these fabliaux, see the same author's "Unfinished Business: Character Conflict, Judgement Scenes, and Narrator-Audience Dialogue in the Old French Fabliaux," Medioevo Romanzo 11 (1986): 379-400. Pitts includes under "judgment" fabliaux not only fabliaux in which characters go to court but also instances in which characters take disputes to a person in authority [(as in (96) Les trois Dames qui troverent un Vit and (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plaiť)] and contests. I disagree with Pitts in classifying (43) La Male Honte and the interrogation by the priest in (19) Le Bouchier d'Abeville as instances of judgment.

of violence that resulted when each party sought to take vengeance against affronts to its honor.[461] The influence of Germanic law lasted in France well into the late Middle Ages. In the Coutumes de Beauvaisis, completed in 1283, the word *venjance* is used to indicate the punishments to be administered for crimes.[462] As late as the fourteenth century the court system was still seen as a vehicle for exacting vengeance. Complaints recorded in the *Registre* of the Parlement de Paris in the fourteenth century stress the need for reparation. Sometimes, out of mistrust for the courts, complainants in the middle of a trial turned to family and friends to find and slay a murderer.[463] Hence even into the fourteenth century, bringing a complaint against an accuser in court was not far removed from the cycle of vendettas it was designed to replace. The newer Romano-canonical procedure, based on the inquest, evolved out of Roman law and was first used in the church, although it had some Frankish parallels. In the inquest, witnesses were summoned and asked to assent to the facts of the case, the accused was allowed to call in his or her own witnesses and respond to the statements of the other witnesses, information was gathered by agents of the court, and judgment was made based on a debate by a tribunal over the findings as they were recorded in written form. Each stage was accompanied by extensive notarial documentation. The verbal process of accusation and counter-accusation was transformed into a largely literary one, and trials were less state-sanctioned opportunities to take vengeance and protect one's honor, and more a matter of seeking out the true facts of the case and protecting the state against infractions by the individual.[464] The inquest was used by the central ducal and county courts and subsequently the local royal courts of provosts and bailiffs in France from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, but its use was not formalized or widespread until the latter years of the thirteenth century, too late for us to expect to see many reflections in the

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461 Gosselin 45, 56-57.

462 Coutumes de Beauvaisis, ed. Am. Salmon (Paris, 1899) 428 ff.

463 Y. Lanhers, "Crimes et criminels au XIVe siècle," Revue historique (1968): 329.

464 On the Germanic and Romano-canonical procedures, see Berman, ch. 1 and pp. 469 ff.; Bloch, Medieval French Literature and the Law ch. 1 and 3; Kaeuper 134-183; Rodrigue Lavoie, "Justice, criminalité et peine de mort en France au Moyen Age, un essai de typologie et de régionalisation," Le sentiment de la mort au Moyen Age. Acte du VIe Colloque de l'Institut médiéval de Montréal (Montreal, 1975) 31-55; and the same author's "Justice, morale et sexualité à Manosque."

fabliaux.[465]

Given the Germanic character of the legal system in France well into the later Middle Ages, then, it is hardly surprising that going to court in the fabliaux is often described as just another form of taking vengeance. We saw above in (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier that the man who lost his eye decides to make a complaint against his rescuer out of a desire for vengeance: "Ge m'en irai clamer de lui/ Por faire lui mal et enui" (ll. 21-22: "I will make a claim against him in order to harm and annoy him"). The threats the wife and husband make in (46) La Coille noire to reveal something in court that will humiliate the other smack more of a desire to take vengeance on each other than to obtain justice. As we saw above, taking vengeance, in its concern with protecting one's own honor, was often more concerned with shame than guilt. Hence even when explicit reference is made to a person going to court or lodging a complaint over some wrong which has been done, happenings which bespeak the experience of guilt, the experience of shame may still constitute a subtext.

F. The Sacrament of Penance

References to the sacrament of penance can be considered indicative of the experience of guilt. Even as understood at the most ill-informed level, the sacrament entailed a recognition of wrongdoing and an acknowledgement that one deserved to be punished, both essential components of the experience of guilt. Interestingly, in the fabliaux references to the sacrament of penance are rare and occur most often when characters are on their deathbeds. While Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 mandated annual confession, complaints about laxness suggest that for some as late as the fourteenth century confession remained something done only *in extremis*.[466]

465I here disagree with R. Howard Bloch, who argues that the inquest is reflected in courtly literature, which in turn also helped shape a mindset that favored the use of the inquest. See Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law.

466Nicole Bériou, "Autour de Latran IV (1215): La naissance de la confession moderne et sa diffusion," Pratiques de la confession. Des pères du désert à Vatican II. Quinze études d'histoire, ed. Groupe de la Bussière (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1983) 77, 90-91. See also Joseph Goering, "The Internal Forum and the Literature of Penance and Confession," ts., April 1994, to appear in the forthcoming History of Medieval Canon Law, ed. Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press); Mary Mansfield, The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth Century France (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) 77-78; Thomas N. Tentler, Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) 70-72.

The verb *confesser*, meaning to confess or own up to,[467] and the noun *confession* are virtually the only terms used in the fabliaux to describe the sacrament. This accords with the fact that the characteristic act of the sacrament of penance by the time of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 was confession.[468] The verb *confesser*, featured in the title of (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, is used to describe the dying wife's confession to her parish priest ("De son provoir fu confesse" [l. 21: "she was confessed by her priest"]). It is also used by the wife when she requests that she be confessed again by a holy monk:

> Uns moines maint mout pres de ci:
> Sainz hom est mout, c'avons oï;
> A m'ame fust grant preu, ce cuit,
> Se je fusse confesse a lui. (ll. 27-30)
>
> A monk lives very near here: he is a very holy man, this we have heard; it would be of great benefit to my soul, I think, if I were confessed by him.

The soul of the peasant in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait uses *confesser* when he tells God how he confessed on his deathbed:

> Qant la mors ot mon cors sopris,
> Si fu confés veraiement
> Et reçut vo cors netement.
> Qui ensi muert, on nos sermone
> Que Deus ses pecciés li pardone. (ll. 150-154)
>
> When death was overtaking me, I had myself truly confessed and received your body cleanly. He who dies in this way, so we are told in sermons, God forgives his sins.

Confession in situations other than *in extremis* is alluded to in only two fabliaux. In (56) Frere Denise, the noble woman proposes to her husband that Frere Denise hear her confession: "Frere Denize est aseneiz/ De ma confession oïr" (ll. 200-201: "Let Friar Denis be the one to hear my confession"). The friar's companion protests, saying that Friar Denis is not licensed to enjoin penance, but the noble woman insists.

> "Dame, a moi vos ferez confesse,
> Car ciz freres n'a pas licence
> De vos enjoindre penitance."
> Et la dame li dit: "Biau sire,

467Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

468Bériou, "Autour de Latran IV" 73-93.

A cestui wel mes pechiez dire
Et de confession parleir!" (ll. 210-215)
"Lady, you will confess to me, for this friar does not have a license to enjoin penance." And the lady said to him: "Good sir, to this one I wish to say my sins and speak of confession."

Her desire for confession from Frere Denis is not sincere, however, but is borne only out a desire to find out whether Frere Denis is actually a woman. In (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, the priest who has been threatened with imprisonment by the bishop for having buried his ass in sacred ground meets privately with the bishop and tells him.

Dire vos weul ma conscience,
Et s'il i afiert penitance,
Ou soit d'avoir ou soit de cors,
Adons si me corrigiez lors. (ll. 137-140)
I wish to reveal my conscience to you and, if penance is proper, either in fines or with physical punishment, then correct me.

The expression "dire ma conscience" appears to be a circumlocution for confession, especially in light of the use of the word *penitance* which follows. A true confession does not subsequently take place, however; rather, the priest is using the language of penance in order to offer the bishop a bribe in veiled (and humorous) terms.

Expressions denoting confession are never used outside the context of the sacrament, as for example to describe when one character admits his or her failings to another. The expression "so may God give me confession" ("Si me doint Dieus confession") occurs in two instances as an oath, similar to "may God help me," to express the desire to have the opportunity to confess on one's deathbed.[469] In (5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse, the expression "Malement l'eüst confessee" (l. 330: "She would have been badly confessed") is used as a circumlocution for "she would have been killed." To be killed was to die suddenly, without the opportunity for confession. The sacrament of penance in the fabliaux was thus closely identified with death.

Penitance and *penance* are used in the fabliaux only to denote satisfaction, not the sacrament of penance.[470] They occur in only five instances. The husband posing as a confessor

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[469]The meaning is clear in (56) Frere Denise: "Si me doint Dieus confession/ Quant l'arme dou cors partira..." (ll. 222-223: So may God give me confession when the soul parts the body"). The other use of this expression occurs in (74) Le Sacristain II l. 640.

[470]This is consistent with the wording in Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council, which uses *poenitentiam* to designate satisfaction only. See Bériou, "Autour de Latran IV" 75. *Penitance* is defined in the Old French dictionaries as "penitance, penance; repentance; expiation, punishment,

monk in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse enjoins *penitance* on his wife (l. 213: "li enjoinst sa penitance"); the friar in (56) Frere Denise, quoted just above, protests that his companion is not licensed to "enjoindre penitance" (l. 212). The priest in the example just quoted above from (111) Le Testament de l'Asne tells the bishop he will do *penitance* (l. 138) if he deems it appropriate, "Ou soit d'avoir ou soit de cors," (l. 139: "Either in fines or with physical punishment"). The lady in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk does *penance* for the sin of adultery and never does any wrong again:

> De sun pecché penaunce prist;
> Ama Deu sor tote rien,
> Unc puis ne mespriht de rien. (ll. 580-582)
>
> She did penance for her sin, loved God above all else, [and] never did anything wrong again.

While the context in which *penance* appears here is clearly religious, it is not made explicit whether she confesses her sin to a priest first. In the very satirical (55) Le Pet au Vilain, *penitance* denotes punishment administered at death by a demon. The devil stomps on the gut of a dying peasant "por penitance" (l. 47), with a very humorous result. As the sacrament of penance was normally administered *in extremis*, the context may be religious in this fabliau as well. Hence *penance* and *penitance*, like *confession*, normally occur in a religious context, although not always in a serious one.[471]

G. Terms Describing Punishment: Justicier, Chastier, Corriger, Encorre

When a person has harmed the "Other," a normal relationship is restored either through making amends for the wrong done or through punishment. The words *justicier* and *chastier* are often used to describe the act of punishing a person for a wrong done. In its basic sense, *justicier* means "to govern" or "to administer," but can also have the sense of "to judge," "to punish" or "to execute."[472] The word occurs only twice in the fabliaux, both times with the sense of "to punish," but outside the context of a court-mandated punishment. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, the priest uses the word *justicier* to describe how he is being punished for his

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suffering. *Peneance* is defined as "penitance, penance; penalty, punishment." See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

471This is in contrast to what Payen states, p. 456. He states that *penitence* in the medieval romance often signifies "épreuve" or "souffrance."

472Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

covetousness:

> "Hé, las," dist il, "Bien me justiche
> Couvoitise, qui mal me maine!
> Ensi ai porcachié ma paine,
> Et mon anui et ma grant honte." (ll. 1119-1122)
>
> "Alas," he says, "Covetousness punishes me well, who treats me badly! Thus I have pursued my own pain and torment and my great shame."

In (105) Les Sohais, *justicier* is used in a religious context to describe the punishment for sin. The angels curse the profession of usury which, they say, causes the soul to be *justicié*:

> Dehait ait or sifais mestiers
> Dont li ame est si tormentee
> Et justicie et tempestee! (ll. 33-35)
>
> Cursed be such a profession, on account of which the soul is tormented and punished and tossed about!

The noun *justice* likewise indicates "punishment."[473] In both instances in which the word is used in the fabliaux, a person with the right of justice sees to the punishment. The count in (83) La Dame escoillee brutally maims the cook for disobeying his express orders, putting out his eye, cutting off his ears and a hand, and finally banishing him, all common forms of punishment in the seigneurial courts of medieval France which had the right of low justice:

> Du queu fist li quens la justise:
> L'ueil li crieve et tolt li l'orille
> Et une main, et puis l'essille
> De sa terre, que n'i remaigne. (ll. 344-347)
>
> The count punished the cook: he put out his eye and cut off his ears and a hand, and then exiled him from his land, that he not remain there.

In (124) Trubert, the duke's nephew, mistaken for Trubert, is beaten, dragged, and finally hanged as punishment for Trubert's numerous offenses. He is said to be delivered *aux justices* and they are said to *faire justice* to him:

> Aus justices l'ont delivré.
> Li seneschaus a commandé
> Que traïnez soit et penduz:
> "Si li ert son loier renduz
> De ce qu'il a monseigneur fet!"

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[473]It can also refer to the right of justice, law, right; jurisdiction; judicial power or authority, tribunal or judge. See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch. In the fabliaux, it occurs only in the sense of "punishment."

Les joutices l'ont einsi fet... (ll. 1636-1641)
They delivered him over to punishment. The seneschal commanded that he be dragged and hanged, "So he will be recompensed for what he did to my lord!" Thus they punished him...

The verb *chastier* indicates "to admonish, warn, instruct," "to reprimand," or "to correct, to punish." The noun *chastiement* indicates "warning, reprimand."[474] In the sense of reprimand or punishment, the terms indicate that a wrong has been done and hence are indicative of the experience of guilt. In (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, the expression *chastier de parole* describes a verbal reprimand for a wrong done. The wife scolds her husband for having a mistress: "Assez li conte d'un et d'el,/ Et le chastie de parole..." (ll. 44-45: "She said enough to him of this and that, and reprimanded him with her words").[475] In (83) La Dame escoillee the verb *chastier* as well as the noun *chastiement* are used repeatedly to describe what husbands should do to wives who disobey them. The beating and cruel treatment administered to the wives in this fabliau suggest that these words are describing punishment, not simple reprimands. A sense of educating or instructing is still implicit in the use of these terms, however. The fabliau begins with the *conteur* stating,

Les foles devez chasotier,
Et si les faites ensaignier
Que n'en doivent enorguillir
Vers lor seignor, ne seignorir,
Mais chier tenir et bien amer,
Et obeïr et onorer... (ll. 11-16)
You ought to chastise bad [wives] and thus make them learn that they ought not be proud towards their husband nor rule over him, but hold him dear and love him well, and obey and honor him...[476]

474Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch. The word *chastier* is used in the sense of "to admonish, warn, instruct" in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, in which the husband, posing as a confessor monk, urges his wife to leave no sin unsaid: "Por ce vous di et vous chasti/ Que vous aiez de vous merci" (ll. 111-112: "For this reason I say to you and admonish you, that you have mercy on yourself"). See also (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier l. 477. In two fabliaux [(52) Le Vilain au Buffet ll. 5-6 A/E/J; (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 227] there appear the proverbs "Cil ne fet mie foli qui d'autre se chastie" and "Preuz est qui d'autri se chastie." In these proverbs *se chastier* has the sense of "to instruct oneself."

475A sense of admonishment may also be present in this usage. The next line makes a reference to school, and so alludes to instruction or warning: "Mes il n'a cure de s'escole" (l. 46: "But he did not care for her school").

476See also ll. 365, 566.

Sometimes, as in (77) Connebert, it is difficult to ascertain precisely which sense *chastier* bears. The relatives of the cuckolded blacksmith, reluctant to take action against the priest who has cuckolded him, advise the blacksmith to simply *chastier* his wife instead: "Chastoiez vo fame, la fole,/ Qui tot vos destruit et afole" (ll. 61-62: "*Chastoiez* your wife, the fool, who completely destroys and cripples you"). Whether *chastier* here means "to admonish, instruct," "to reprimand," or "to punish" is not clear. What is interesting, however, is that *chastier* is the only term commonly used in the fabliaux to convey a sense of correcting and educating the wrongdoer as opposed to simply judging and punishing him.[477] It is often accompanied in the fabliaux by other terms from the vocabulary of guilt such as *mesfait*, *pardoner*, and *merci*.

The word *encorre* is used much less frequently. It can indicate the act of incurring a sin, but in the fabliaux appears only in the sense of "to be punished."[478] It appears twice in the same proverb: "Tiex ne peche qui encort" ("He who does not sin is punished").[479]

The term *corriger*, like *chastier*, has the sense of "to punish" as well as "to correct"[480] but it occurs in only one fabliau, (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, in the passage quoted above. The priest says to the bishop that if he (the bishop) deems that he ought to do penance, "Adons si me corrigiez lors" (l. 140: "then *corrigiez* me"). Both "to punish" and "to correct" can be understood by *corriger* here.

References to the punishments which characters expect to receive for a misdeed,

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[477]It is interesting in this context to note that the newer penitential manuals which circulated after 1215 generally emphasized the judicial aspects of penance more than its healing capabilities. See Nicole Bériou, "La confession dans les écrits théologiques et pastoraux du XIIIe siècle. Médication de l'âme ou démarche judiciaire?" L'Aveu: Antiquité et Moyen Age. Actes de la Table ronde organisée par l'Ecole française de Rome avec le concours du CNRS et de l'Université de Trieste - Rome, 28-30 mars 1984, Collections de l'Ecole française de Rome 88 (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1986) 261-282. Cf. Joseph Goering, "The Summa of Master Serlo and Thirteenth-Century Penitential Literature," Mediaeval Studies 40 (1978): 290-311. Bériou in her article "Autour de Latran IV (1215)" observes that sermons preached in order to persuade listeners to confess varied in their emphasis according to the audience. Those composed for religious communities or monasteries presented confession as an act of conversion, while those directed at the laity presented it more as a matter of moral and spiritual hygiene, or a way to acquire a magic object of guaranteed efficacy.

[478]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[479](69) Les Tresces II l. 268; (85) Les quatres Prestres l. 80.

[480]The Old French dictionaries define the word as "to improve, correct; to reprimand; to punish." See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

especially when coupled with a sense that the character is responsible for the misdeed, may also be considered indicative of the experience of guilt. Hence the many characters who expect to be hanged for their part in a murder, the adulterous women who fear a beating from their husbands, and the characters who express a concern for the fate of their soul may all be considered to be experiencing guilt. The loyal wife in (93) Guillaume au Faucon, for instance, is telling the squire Guillaume that he has fallen into a state of guilt when he attempts to win her affection by starving himself: "Quant vos ainsi vos ociez,/ La vostre ame sera perie" (ll. 423-424: "When you kill yourself thus, your soul will be lost"). The young woman in (109) Une seule Fame qui a son Cors servoit cent Chevaliers de tous Poins likewise appears to be experiencing guilt. She has incited a knight to kill her rival, and tells those who accuse her of the murder that she expects to suffer *torment* as a result:

> Deul que de ma compeingne avoie,
> Pource c'on li faisoit plus joie
> Que moi, si com il me sambloit,
> Et de vos mieus ammee estoit.
> Pour soupeçon de jalousie,
> Par haÿne traicte d'envie,
> Pour ce la haioie si forment
> Qu'il ne me chaut de quel torment
> Des or mais mourir me faciez!" (ll. 165-173)

> I was sad because of my companion, because one treated her better than me, so it seemed to me, and she was better loved by you. Through suspicion born of jealousy, through hatred drawn from envy, for these reasons I hated her so much that I do not care with what torment you may consequently put me to death!"

Rarely do these situations occur without other terms from the vocabulary of guilt, however.

H. Terms Describing Making Amends or Paying the Debt to the "Other:" Amender, Espanir, Deservir, Comperer, Payer, Vengier

The terms discussed above denoting punishment present punishment as a judicial act merited by the wrong done. Occurring much more frequently in the fabliaux are terms that denote punishment as the act of restoring the balance in the relationship with the "Other." Several terms are used to describe punishment in this sense, including terms that denote making amends, expiating guilt, penance, vengeance, and paying for some wrong done. All imply a sense of balance being restored.

Making amends is denoted by the word *amender*, which in fact has three senses: "to help;"[481] "to improve;"[482] and "to make reparations for a fault."[483] In the latter sense, *amender* bespeaks the experience of guilt. The noun *amende*, indicating "reparation, satisfaction, compensation, punishment," always denotes guilt. Sometimes *amender* and *amende* refer to formal reparations made through court. Hence the fool at the court in (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier states that the man who put out the eye of another in the course of rescuing him from drowning should *amender* the man for his lost eye in certain circumstances: "Cil li doit son oeil amender" (l. 56: "He should amend him for his eye"). Reparations made in a court appear to be alluded to also in (81) Le Prestre teint when the loyal wife who is outraged on being propositioned by the priest through his go-between strikes the woman and says, "Por poi que ne vos faz anui,/ Qui que le deüst amender!" (ll. 168-169: "I almost do you harm, regardless of who must make amends for it!"). In other cases, *amende* indicates making amends for wrongs outside the court system. The husband in (17) Les Braies au Cordelier who had earlier berated and nearly killed his wife when he finds evidence of her adultery and then is given proof of her fidelity tells his wife that he will make the *amende* to her of never again suspecting her of adultery:

> ..."Dame, ne vos desplaise,
> S'un poi vos ai faite marrie:
> Foi que ge doi sainte Marie,
> Tel amende vos en ferai
> Que ja mais de vos ne serai
> En soupeçon de jalousie!" (ll. 341-346)
>
> "Lady, may it not displease you if I made you a little sad: By the faith I owe St. Mary, I will make this amend to you: I will never be jealous regarding you!"[484]

The messenger in (124) Trubert relates that King Golias wishes to make peace with him and

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481 See for example (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, in which the bishop says "Dieus l'ament" (l. 158: "May God help him") when he accepts a payment from the priest relating to the burial of the priest's ass.

482 See for example (24) Le Provost a l'Aumuche, in which the provost's reputation is said to be *amendé* on account of his wealth: "Si en ert amendez ses pris" (l. 16: "Thus his reputation was improved"). See also (100) Le Vallet qui d'Aise a Malaise se met l. 352; (124) Trubert l. 2318.

483 The Old French dictionaries define it as "to help; to improve, correct; to make reparations for a fault, to compensate; to punish, to expiate." See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

484 See also (124) Trubert l. 993.

amende whatever wrong he has done to him: "De quan que vos a fet de tort/ Or vos en velt feire l'amende" (ll. 2063-2064: "Whatever wrong he has done to you, he now wishes to make amends for it"). *Amende* and *amender* in the sense of "to make reparation for a fault" are never used in the context of sin and confession in the fabliaux, but are often accompanied by other terms from the vocabulary of guilt, especially those typically employed in a legal context, such as *jugement*, *fere le droit*, *tort*, and *forfait*.

In contrast, the word *espeneir*, meaning "to pay an amend; to expiate; to do penance,"[485] is used exclusively in a religious context in the fabliaux. It appears in only two instances. In (16) La Housse partie, the father tells his son that helping him in his old age will *espeneir* his sins better than wearing a hair shirt:

> "Ja ne pués tu mieus espenir
> Toz tes pechiez qu'en moi bien faire
> Que se tu vestoies la haire!" (ll. 262-264)
> Never can you better expiate all your sins than in doing good to me, even if you were to wear a hair shirt!

The prior in (74) Le Sacristain I, thinking that he has killed the sacristan, uses *espeneir* when he exclaims that the sin he has committed will never be expiated:

> "E, Dius, j'ai mort le secretain:
> Le pecié n'ert ja espani! (ll. 244-245)
> Dius, com m'a encombré peciés!" (l. 249)
> Oh, God, I have killed the sacristan: the sin will never be expiated!
> ... God, how sin encumbers me!

In both these uses, *espenir* clearly indicates "to expiate."

The verb *comperer* means "to acquire, buy", "to pay," and "to expiate, to be punished for, to merit."[486] In the fabliaux it appears more often than *espenir*, and is used almost exclusively in the sense of "to expiate." A sense of making up for a wrong done is always explicit in this usage. In (2) Constant du Hamel, for instance, the priest denounces Constant in church for having married a woman who is his *comere* (either the godmother of his children, or the mother of the children to whom he is a godfather). The priest says he ought to *comperer* for this offense and then turns the couple out of church: "Il a espousé sa comere,/ Si est bien droiz qu'il le compere"

485Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

486Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

(ll. 198-199: "He has married his *comere*, so it is very right that he expiate this").[487] The context in which *comperer* appears sometimes contains other terms from the vocabulary of guilt and places the emphasis on the wrong done, but at other times the context is more suggestive of shame. In (1) Estormi, for instance, the context suggests guilt. Jehan remarks that the fourth priest who has been killed, unlike the three who preceded him, did no *mesfet* and does not deserve to pay the *forfet*. The emphasis is on a wrongful deed (or in this case, the lack of one) and the resulting punishment:

> "Par foi, or va plus malement,
> Que cil n'i avoit riens mesfet!
> Mes teus compere le forfet
> Qui n'i a pas mort deservie." (ll. 584-587)
>
> "By my faith, now it goes more badly, for this one did nothing wrong! But he pays the forfeit who has not deserved death."

In (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, in contrast, the word *comperer* occurs with terms from the vocabulary of shame. The wife, acting as if she were outraged over being propositioned by a cleric, tells her household:

> Unc mes ne m'avint en ma vie
> Ke hom mesfeiht la vileinie:
> Si il ne seit cher comparé,
> A tuz jurs serrai vergundé! (ll. 533-536)
>
> It never happened in my life that a man did villainy to me: if he does not pay for it dearly, I will be shamed always!

In this context, *comperer* indicates the act of taking vengeance and protecting one's honor, part of the experience of shame.

The word *paier* has a variety of meanings, including "to appease, reconcile, pacify," and "to pay, to satisfy, to take vengeance."[488] The expression "paier un cop" was an idiomatic one, indicating "to give a blow, to strike." In the fabliaux, outside the context of making a purchase, *paier* always conveys the notion of paying someone back for some wrong done.[489] In (36) La Saineresse, for example, *paier* is used to describe how the wife pays back her husband for boasting that he can never be deceived by a woman. She sleeps with another man in the upstairs

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487See also (69)Les Tresces I l. 270- 271 B; (74) Le Sacristain II l. 428; (83) La Dame escoillee l. 230; (124) Trubert ll. 1420, 2710.

488Godefroy; Greimas.

489In addition to the examples cited below, see also (1)Estormi l. 605; (2) Constant du Hamel l. 656; (119) Le Clerc qui fu repus derriere l'Escrin ll. 110, 123.

chamber while her husband is in the house and then describes what happened to him afterwards using what to the audience would have seemed only thinly disguised medical metaphors. The *conteur* comments, "Ja n'en fust païe a garant,/ Se ne li contast maintenant" (ll. 105-106: "He would never have been paid back, if he had not told her now [that he could never be tricked]). In (120) Le Sentier battu the sense of tit for tat is even more explicit. The *conteur* comments,

> Mauvés fet juer de voir gas,
> Car on dist, et c'est chose vraie,
> Que bonne atent qui bonne paie.
> Cui on ramposne ou on ledenge,
> Quant il en voit lieu, il s'en venge.
> Et tel d'autrui moquier s'atourne,
> Que sus lui meïsme retourne. (ll. 6-12)
>
> He does badly to make a joke about something true, for one says, and it's true, that good things await those who pay back well. He whom one insults or mocks, when he sees the opportunity he avenges himself. And he who turns himself to mocking another has it come back on him.

Even when it denotes "to give a blow, to strike," *paier* often conveys the notion of revenge.[490] In (42) Le Fevre de Creil, the husband tells his wife that she will have her recompense (*guerredon*) for planning to sleep with another man, and then beats her. The *conteur* uses *paier* to describe the beating:

> "Ja en avrez vo guerredon!"
> Lors avoit pris un grant baston,
> Si la vous commence a paier
> Si que les os li fet ploier;
> Se li a tant de cops donez
> Qu'il est sor li trestoz lassez. (ll. 167-172)
>
> "Now you will have your recompense!" Then he took a great stick, behold he began to pay her, so that he made her bones bend; he gave her so many blows that he was completely worn out over her.

Interestingly, *paier* when used in the fabliaux in the sense of paying someone back for some wrong or offense is not accompanied by terms either from the vocabulary of shame or guilt. It would seem that the focus in the use of the term is on the idea of paying back, rather than punishment, misdeed, or affronted honor.

The word *desservir* indicates giving or receiving one's due. Hence it can mean "to merit,

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[490]One notable exception is (124) Trubert, in which Trubert on two different occasions "pays" the duke, beating him severely (ll. 815, 1304). In the first instance the duke protests that he has not offended Trubert, suggesting that *paier* does in fact normally indicate revenge for some wrong.

to win, to recompense" or, in a more negative sense, "to pay back, to retaliate." The noun *deserte* likewise indicates something merited or deserved, and can be used in the positive sense to indicate "merit, recompense, or salary,"or in the negative sense to indicate "requital, retaliation, retribution."[491] The words are sometimes used in a positive sense in the fabliaux to describe being rewarded for good actions. In (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait, for instance, *deserte* is used to describe a meritorious act. St. Paul tells the peasant, whom he thinks is not worthy of entering:

> "Vilain," fait il, "Qui vos conduist?
> Çaiens ne doit vilains entrer,
> Ne herbergier ne habiter.
> Ou fesistes vos la deserte
> Que la porte vos fu overte?" (ll. 82-86)
>
> "Peasant, he said, "Who brought you here? No peasant should enter here, nor lodge nor live here. Who did a meritorious act for you, that the gate [of heaven] was opened to you?"[492]

In the negative sense of meriting punishment, however, it can indicate restoring the balance in the relationship with the "Other" and hence the experience of guilt. In (56) Frere Denise, for instance, the lady who has discovered the friar's awful crime tells him that he has *deservi* shame and that she will give to him his *deserte*:

> Bien aveiz honte deservie
> Conme faulz traïtre provei!
> Et vos aveiz mout bien trovei
> Qui vos rendra votre deserte! (ll. 264-267)
>
> You have well deserved shame, as a false [and] proven traitor!
> And you have very well found the person who will give to you your just deserts![493]

Occasionally *deservir* is used with other terms from the vocabulary of guilt, as in the example cited just above from (1) Estormi, in which Jehan observes that the fourth and innocent priest did nothing to deserve death:

> "Par foi, or va plus malement,
> Que cil n'i avoit riens mesfet!
> Mes teus compere le forfet
> Qui n'a pas mort deservie." (ll. 584-587)

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[491]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

[492]See also (59) Le Foteor l. 357.16; (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne l. (254).

[493]See also (74) Le Sacristain II l. 82; (124) Trubert ll. 372, 797.

"By my faith, now it goes more badly, for this one did nothing wrong! But he pays the forfeit who has not deserved death."[494]

In virtually every instance in which the word is used, there is an emphasis on the fact that a wrongful deed has been done and some form of punishment is necessary as a result. Despite the fact that the word can indicate "to pay back," shame is not typically associated with it, except insofar as characters are said to deserve to be shamed, as in the example just cited from (56) Frere Denise.[495]

The words *vengier*, *vengement*, *venjance* and *revanchier* occur with great frequency in the fabliaux. The terms describe the act of taking revenge or retaliation; they can also denote "to punish" or "punishment."[496] Whenever the terms are used in the fabliaux, they denote restoring balance in the relationship with the "Other" and can almost always be considered indicative of the experience of guilt. The notion that the victim is restoring balance by exacting vengeance is made explicit in some fabliaux. In the passage cited above from (120) Le Sentier battu, for instance, the *conteur* comments on how mocking a person leads that person to mock oneself in return:

Mauvés fet juer de voir gas,
Car on dist, et c'est chose vraie,
Que bonne atent qui bonne paie.
Cui on ramposne ou on ledenge,
Quant il en voit lieu, il s'en venge.
Et tel d'autrui moquier s'atourne,
Que sus lui meïsme retourne. (ll. 6-12)

He does badly to make a joke about something true, for one says, and it's true, that good things await those who pay back well. He whom one insults or mocks, when he sees the opportunity he avenges himself. And he who turns himself to mocking another has it come back on him.[497]

The victim's revenge can take a variety of forms and need not exactly match the offense that was initially perpetrated. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, *vengier* describes a tongue-lashing given by the mistress to the priest in revenge for having forced her into adultery:

494See also (124) Trubert l. 372.

495See also (124) Trubert l. 797.

496Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

497See also (48) L'Enfant qui fut remis au Soleil ll. 139-146.

-"Hé, vous estes bien esmeüe
En maudire et en lesdengier,
Si vous cuidiés en moi vengier... " (ll. 1021-1023)
"Ah, you are all worked up in cursing and insulting me, thus you think to take vengeance on me..."

In (30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue II, eating a heron is the nurse's vengeance for the sorrow she suffers. She has carefully guarded for years the virginity of her charge, a young girl, only to have a young man passing by cleverly steal it in exchange for a heron. The nurse plans to eat the heron, thinking thus to avenge the sorrow which the girl has caused her: "Dunt pensa ke ele en mangeroit./ E son dul sus i uengeroit" (ll. 89-90 i: Then she thought that she would eat it. And thus she would avenge her sorrow").

As is typical, *vengier* in the situations just described entails taking some action that in itself could be considered wrong (scolding one's lord, eating a bird given to another) in order to make up for a wrong. Indeed, often in the fabliaux one character decides to shame another as revenge, like the knight in (120) Le Sentier battu who is insulted by a noble woman and then insults her in turn. The wife in (14) Aloul who is shamed by being jealously guarded by her husband decides to cuckold him as a way to shame him in return. The fabliaux (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux, in which a miller who sought to deflower a young girl is himself cuckolded, ends with the admonition that one should not shame good men: "C'onques ne vous prenge talens/ De faire honte a bone gens" (ll. 409-410: "May you never seek to shame good men"). The implication is that one should seek to shame a person only out of revenge or as punishment.

The words *vengier* and its derivatives occasionally occur in a context containing numerous other terms from the vocabulary of guilt. In a passage previously cited, the cleric in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk attempts to make the object of his affections accede to his request for love by trying to make her feel guilty. He tells her that she is wrong (*tort*) and says that God will taken vengeance (*vengance*) on her for killing him through her refusal. She takes his words to heart, thinking that it is better to commit a sin (*pecché*) that is against her will than to allow such a man to die for her and thus be guilty of murder:

"Certes, ma dame, vus avez tort!
Ne soliez bien Deu amer?
E volez ore un chaitif tuer!
Si jeo meur pur vostre amur,
Jeo requer nostre creatur
Ke il prenge de vus vengance.
Kant faire me poez aleggance,
Si issi morir me lessez,
Apert homicide serrez!

Le main mal deit hom eslire
Pur eschure cel ke est pire." (ll. 310-320)
Pensa la dame: "Jeo ai tort:
Si cist se lest pur moi morir,
Ou purrai jeo lasse devenir?"
Par sei iugie e quide,
Si il meurt, que ele seit homicide;
Meuz li vaut fere un pecché
Ke seit encontre sa volenté,
Ke apertement e de gré suffrir
Un tel homme pur li morir. (ll. 338-346)

"Certainly, my lady, you are wrong! Are you not accustomed to love God? And now you want to kill a wretch! If I die for your love, I will request our creator to take vengeance on you. When you are able to make things better for me, and you let me die thus, you will be an open killer! One ought to chose the lesser evil to escape that which is worse." ...The lady thought, "I am wrong: if I let him die for me, where can I, a wretch, go?" To herself the lady judged and thought that if he died, she would be a killer; it was better to commit a sin that was against her will than to openly and willingly allow such a man to die for her.

In (83) La Dame escoillee, the newlywed countess describes a beating which her husband gave her for disobeying him as "venjance" (l. 523). The exchange between husband and wife just after she commits the offense clearly betokens the experience of guilt:

"Or m'en repent, por Dieu, merci!"
-"Bele," ce dit li quens, "Par Dé,
Ja ne vos sera pardoné
Sanz le vostre chastiement!" (ll. 362-365)

"Now I repent, for God's sake mercy!" -"Beautiful one," says the count, "You will never be forgiven without being chastised!"

More often, however, *vengier* and its derivatives occur with terms from the vocabulary of shame. Taking vengeance in and of itself is not part of the experience of shame, but, as in the example cited above from (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, to fail to be avenged when one has something shameful done to him or her is to remain shamed. This equation is made explicit in several fabliaux. In (14) Aloul, the cuckolded husband Aloul says to his household, after they have failed to capture the priest who has cuckolded him, that he remains a cuckold until he is avenged:

"Et je remaindrai ci si cous?
N'en serai vengiez par nului? ... (ll. 746-747)
N'avrai mes joie ne leece
Si me serai de lui vengiez!" (ll. 756-757)

"And I will remain a cuckold here? I will not be avenged by anyone? ...I will have no joy nor happiness until I am avenged on him."

In (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel, the cuckold who fails to take vengeance is said not to be a *preudome*. The implication is that if one fails to take vengeance, one deserved to be shamed: "s'il eust cuer de preudomme,/ Jl s'en veniast a la parsomme" (ll. 199-200 A: "If he had the heart of a good man, he would have avenged himself completely"). In (124) Trubert, the duke's men claim that they will be shamed if they do not take vengeance for their duke, who has been badly beaten:

"Sire, ce sera molt grant maus
Se nos ne savons qui ce a fet;
Grant honte i avrons et grant let,
Se vos n'estes vengiez tantost." (ll. 1014-1017)

"Sir, it will be a great evil if we do not know who did this; we will suffer great shame and great outrage if you are not avenged at once."[498]

It is interesting to note that in virtually every instance in which the word *vengier* or its derivatives are used in the fabliaux, the offense for which a character seeks vengeance is in fact something that is described as shameful to the victim, either in that particular fabliaux or in others. Hence the offenses inciting a character to vengeance are those typically described by terms from the vocabulary of shame: being cuckolded or dominated by one's wife, being insulted, being propositioned, being sodomized, being jealously guarded by one's husband or mother-in-law as if one were not faithful, being sold for sex, and being tricked, beaten or defeated.[499] *Vengier* is thus used to describe the punishment one exacts when one is shamed.

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[498]See also (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 224; (77) Connebert l. 81; (124) Trubert ll. 592-593.

[499]In addition to the examples cited above, see also (1) Estormi ll. 454-455, 582; (5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse l. 80; (14) Aloul l. 928; (19) La Borgoise d'Orliens ll. 204, 247; l. 141 B; (34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 266 A; (43) La Male Honte l. 123 F; (51) Les deus Changeors l. 282; (53) Le sot Chevalier ll. 158, 310; (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 35; (113) Le Chevalier a la Corbeille l. 91; (120) Le Sentier battu ll. 93, 114; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk ll. 529, 544. The only exception is the use of *vengier* in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre in which the dying priest is annoyed by the friars who claim to be acting out of concern for his soul when they urge him to take back something he has already bequested so as to leave something to their order in his will: "Et pense qu'il s'en vengera,/ S'ilh puet, et qu'il les trufera" (ll. 132-133: "And he thinks that he will avenge himself if he can and that he will trick them"). Perhaps *vengier* here could be understood as reflecting the rivalry between the regular and the mendicant orders.

Other terms are used occasionally to describe the act of making up for some wrong done. *Loier*, meaning "salary, payment; recompense, reward"[500] is used twice to indicate the punishment due for wrongdoing. The peasant in (88) Le Prestre et le Leu who sets a trap for the priest cuckolding him and subsequently ensnares the priest as well as a wolf and his wife's serving girl who is helping his wife in her adulterous assignation swears that each will have his *loier*: "jura/ Que chascun son loier avra" (ll. 19-20: "swore that each will have his recompense"). He then kills the wolf, castrates the priest, and chases away the servant girl. The seneschal in (124) Trubert uses *loier* to describe the death sentence he gives to Trubert: "Si li ert son loier renduz/ De ce qu'il a monseigneur fet!" (ll. 1639-1640: "Thus he will be given his recompense for what he has done to my lord!"). The word *merite*, meaning "that which has been merited; recompense, salary; punishment,"[501] is used in one fabliaux to describe the punishment due for an offense. The priest's mistress in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville uses *merite* to describe what the priest should give to the servant girl who has insulted her:

> Sire, s'en saviez le voir
> De le honte qu'ele m'a dite,
> Vos l'en rendriez la merite,
> Car vos enfanz m'a reprovez. (ll. 406-409)
>
> Certainly, if you knew the truth about the shame which she said to me, you would give her her due, for she reproached me for your children.[502]

The word *guerredon* can have the positive sense of recompense, salary or gift, or the negative sense of retaliation or retribution. It can also indicate penance.[503] It is used by the blacksmith in (42) Le Fevre de Creeil to describe the beating he is about to give to his wife for attempting to cuckold him: "Ja en avrez vo guerredon!" (l. 167: You will soon have your recompense!"). The idea of restoring balance in the relationship with the "Other" and making up for some wrong done is implicit in all these uses.

500Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

501Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

502See also (79) Le povre Clerc, in which *merite* is used to describe the reward of a cloak and hood given to the poor cleric when he reveals to a good peasant that he is being cuckolded: "Bien li a randu sa merite" (l. 240: "Well did he give him his recompense").

503Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

I. Terms Describing Forgiveness Without Paying the (Full) Debt to the "Other": Pardoner, Assolir/Assoudre, Merci, Delivre, Cuite

Forgiveness entails pardoning all or part of the debt owed to the "Other." Implicit in the idea of forgiveness also is the recognition that the balance in the relationship with the "Other" has been restored. A variety of terms are used in the fabliaux to describe these concepts. One of the more commonly used terms is the verb *pardoner* and the noun *pardon*. The verb *pardoner* can indicate simply "to give," but in the fabliaux it is used only in the sense of "to remit, pardon, forgive."[504] In only two instances are the verb or noun used in the context of the sacrament of penance. The priest in (14) Aloul makes a play on the act of absolution in penance when he strikes down the cowherd Berengier and then urges him to get up, saying he does not know how to give any other *pardon*:

> "...levez sus:
> Cuites estes et absolus,
> Ne sai doner autres pardons.
> Fetes venir voz compaignons,
> Si avront part en ceste offrande!" (ll. 877-881)
>
> "...get up: you are quit and absolved, I do not know how to give other pardon. Make your companions come, so they will have a part in this offering!

In (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait, as cited above, the soul of the peasant describes his deathbed confession and explains that, since he has done all that he has been taught to do in sermons, God should forgive (*pardone*) his sins and he should be allowed to stay in heaven:

> Qant la mors ot mon cors sopris,
> Si fu confés veraiement
> Et reçut vo cors netement.
> Qui ensi muert, on nos sermone
> Que Deus ses pecciés li pardone. (ll. 150-154)
>
> When death was overtaking me, I had myself truly confessed and received your body cleanly. He who dies in this way, so we are told in sermons, God forgives his sins.

Pardoner occurs more frequently in religious contexts outside the sacrament of penance. In (111) Le Testament de l'Asne, *pardoner* describes the forgiveness that comes from making a large bequest to the church. Forgiveness is a parody here, however: the priest gives the bishop a large sum only so as to appease the bishop who is outraged upon hearing that the priest has buried his ass in sacred ground. The bishop's prayer that the ass's sins be forgiven is nothing

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[504]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

more than an acknowledgement that the bribe has been accepted:

> "Pour ce qu'il soit d'enfer delivres,
> Les vos laisse en son testament."
> -"Hé," dist l'esvesques, "Dieus l'ament,
> Et si li pardoint ses meffais
> Et toz les pechiez qu'il at fais!" (ll. 156-160)
>
> In order that he be delivered from hell, he has left them [the twenty pounds] to you in his will." -"Ah," said the bishop, "May God help him, and forgive him his offenses and all the sins which he has committed!"

Pardoner is also used in the fabliaux to express a concern that, after death, one's sins be pardoned. One of the nuns in (121) Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne wishes that one could acquire forgiveness for all sins ("pardon/ De touz mesfais" ll. 173-174). The angels caught in the peasant's bird trap in (105) Les Sohais are able to play on a similar concern, telling the peasant that if he releases them, God will grant him true forgiveness: "Tu en aras tel gerredon/ Que Deus te fera vrai pardon" (ll. 8-9: "You will have such a recompense for it, that God will grant you true pardon").

Often *pardon* occurs in subjunctive phrases such as "Dieu pardon li face" ("may God forgive him")[505] and "si aie ge pardon" ("so may I have pardon").[506] These phrases are most often spoken after a character dies. In (102) Le Prestre comporté, the *conteur* acknowledges that such phrases are often more rhetorical than meaningful when he comments, after the burial of the priest,

> ...Le prestre, cui Dius doinst pardon-
> S'onques Dieus donna si grant don
> A arme de prestre encombré,
> Mais se Dieus a a droit nombré,
> Nous cuidons qu'il n'en pense point
> D'arme qui est prise en tel point! (ll. 1101-1106)
>
> ...the priest, to whom God may grant pardon, if God ever gave such a great gift to the soul of a priest encumbered [with sin], but if God has calculated rightly, we think that he does not think at all of a soul which died in such a situation!

Most frequently, *pardoner* and *pardone* appear in the fabliaux in situations in which one character asks forgiveness of another whom he or she has mistreated or wrongly accused of some

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505(16) La Housse partie II l. 165; (22) Du Con qui fu fait a la Besche l. 76; (124) Trubert l. 94.

506(79) Le povre Clerc l. 108. In this instance, the phrase prefaces a character's bald-faced lie.

misdeed. The context is not religious, but typically contains other terms from the vocabulary of guilt. For instance, the husband in (116) Le Pliçon sneaks into the house in the middle of the night, giving his wife a fright and making her think he is trying to catch her with a lover. He subsequently asks for her forgiveness with the words,

> "Soer," dist il, "De çou c'ai meffait
> Me pardonnés tout le mesfait,
> Car je ne vous mescreÿ onques." (ll. 63-65)
> "Sister," he said, "Concerning that which I have done wrong,
> forgive me all the misdeed, for I never doubted you."

The exchange between the wife and the husband in (70) Les Sohait des Vez, prompted by the wife hitting her husband in her sleep, uses *pardoner* as well as the rhetorical *Deus te face pardon* in a similar context:

> "Si fis comme fame endormie.
> Por Deu, ne vos coreciez mie,
> Que se je ai folie faite,
> Et je m'an rant vers vous mesfaite,
> Si vos en pri merci de cuer!"
> -"Par ma foi," fait il, "Bele suer,
> Jo vos pardoin et Deus si face!" (ll. 175-181)
> "I acted like a woman in her sleep. For God's sake, do not get at all angry, for as I did this foolish act, and render myself to you guilty, so I beseech you for mercy from the heart!" -"By my faith," he said, "Beautiful sister, I pardon you, and so may God grant you [pardon]!"

Reference to the devil as well as the adjective *repentant* accompany the use of *pardoner* in (13) Le Vilain Mire, in which the husband apologizes to his wife for beating her:

> ..."Por Deu, merci!
> Tot ce m'a fet fere anemi.
> De ce que batue uos ai
> Et de quant que mesfet uos ai
> J'en sui dolenz et repentans."
> Tant li dist le uilein puans
> Que cele li a pardonné. (ll. 99-105 C)
> "For God's sake, mercy! The devil made me do all this. I am very sorrowful and repentant for beating you and whatever wrong I have done to you." So much did the stinking peasant say to her that she forgave him.[507]

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[507]See also (16) La Housse partie II ll. 161-167; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 281; (69) Les Tresces I ll. 252-253; (83) La Dame escoillee ll. 362-365.

Characters seek pardon not just for their misdeeds, but for the negative emotions which their misdeeds have provoked in the "Other." In (17) Les Braies au Cordelier, the wife apologizes for yelling at her husband with the words, "pardonez moi vostre ire!" (l. 179: "Forgive me for the ire [I provoked in you]!"), and in (43) La Male Honte the king, upon realizing his mistake in interpreting the peasant's words, forgives the peasant for having made him so angry: "son mautalent li pardone" (l. 142 A: "He forgave him for his anger"). In (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame, the husband asks his wife to forgive the ghost for any *mautalant*, *ire*, and *coroz* she has towards the ghost:

> -"Dame, dame," fait se li sire,
> "Se avez mautalant ne ire
> Ne coroz vers ce chevalier,
> Pardonez li, jo vos requier,
> N'aiez vers lui rancor, par m'ame! (ll. 217-220.1)
> -"Lady, lady," said the knight, "If you have irritation or anger or rage toward this knight, forgive him for it, I request, have no rancor towards him, by my soul!"

Pardoner and *pardon* thus occur in the fabliaux in several different contexts. They are used in the context of confession but rarely and are used somewhat more frequently to describe sin which is to be forgiven by God. Most often, however, the words are used in an entirely secular context to describe the act of one character forgiving another, either for a misdeed or for the negative emotion which the misdeed has aroused.

The verbs *assolir* and *assoudre*, meaning "to absolve,"[508] occur in only three instances in total in the fabliaux, and never in a serious context. Similar to *pardoner*, the words are used in almost rhetorical fashion to express the desire for forgiveness of sins after death. In (4) Auberee, the old seamstress utters the phrase "Dieus la soille!" (l. 166 "May God absolve her!") when she mentions a recently-departed person. In (97) Le povre Mercier the merchant uses *assoudre*, in the form of the past participle *essos*, as an oath when he swears to a potential purchaser how much his horse is worth:

> -"Sire, par le peril de m'ame
> Ne par la foi qu'i doi Ma Dame,
> Ne se ja mes cors soit assous,
> Il valoit bien soissante sous." (ll. 111-114)
> -"Sir, by the peril of my soul, by the faith which I owe My Lady, and may my body never be absolved, it is well worth sixty sous."

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[508]Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

The passage from (14) Aloul cited above, in which the priest says to Berengier that he is *absolus* when he strikes him down and then urges him to get up, likewise is not serious. Yedlicka notes that the giving of absolution, usually in the form of "Je t'assol," occurs but rarely in medieval French moral and didactic literature.[509] The emphasis in penitential literature prior to the eleventh century was on the performance of penitential works and, in the eleventh and twelfth century, on contrition. Only later, and especially under the influence of Duns Scotus, was the role of the priest emphasized to the point that some spoke of the "sacrament of absolution."[510] Unlike *pardoner*, then, the vernacular *assolir* and *assoudre* do not appear to have had widespread usage in a non-religious context.

The noun *merci* occurs more frequently than any other term in this category. It can mean pity or grace,[511] as in (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel II, in which the wife calls on the villagers for help with her husband, whom she claims has gone out of his mind: "Beles genz," fet ele, "Merci!/ Il covient mon seignour lier" (ll. 52-53: "Good people," she said, "[Show] pity! You must tie up my lord!).[512] *Merci* can also constitute an expression of thanks,[513] as in the expression "vostre merci" in (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame, in which the knight says to his lady after she has agreed to forgive him a trespass, "Vostre merci, ma doce amie" (l. 240: "Thanks to you, my sweet lady"). It can also indicate "please,"[514] as in (67) *Le Porcelet*, in which the husband asks his wife to leave him alone: ""Vostre merci, laissiez m'an paiz..." (l. 54: "Please leave me in peace...").[515] Most often, however, it indicates mercy.[516] Sometimes characters beg for mercy when they are about to be beaten by robbers[517] or when they

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509Yedlicka 405.

510Paul Anciaux, La théologie du sacrament de pénitence au XIIe siècle (Louvain: É. Nauwelaerts, 1949) 275-353; Berman 172-173; B. Poschmann, Penance and the Annointing of the Sick, tr. and rev. F. Courtney (New York, 1964) ch. 9; Tentler, Sin and Confession 22-27.

511Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

512See also (53) Le sot Chevalier l. 257.

513Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

514Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

515See also (42) Le Fevre de Creeil l. 151.

516Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

517(124) Trubert l. 968. The merchant thinks the duke's squires are robbing him.

are beseeching a lady for her favors;[518] most often, however, characters ask for *merci* when they expect another character to punish him or her for having committed some offense. Hence *merci* is often an indicator of the experience of guilt. It occurs in expressions such as *merci li prie* ("he beseeches him for mercy")[519] and *merci li crie* ("he cries out to him for mercy").[520] In dialogue, the simple exclamatory *merci!* is often used.[521] In every case, there is a sense that punishment is imminent[522] and other terms from the vocabulary of guilt are employed. Hence the priest in (14) Aloul who faces castration from the husband whom he has just cuckolded says,

> "Aloul," dist il, "por Dieu merci,
> Ne me disfigurez issi!
> De pecheor misericorde!" (ll. 941-943)
> "Aloul," he said, "For God's sake mercy! Do not disfigure me in this way! Have mercy on a sinner!"

Two gestures typically accompany the appeal for mercy: falling down on one's knees before the "Other" and joining one's hands together. In (56) Frere Denise, for example, when the noble woman reveals to the young girl that she knows she has been sinning with her male companion, the girl responds by falling on her knees and crying for mercy, hands joined in supplication:

> A genoillons merci li crie,
> Jointes mains li requiert et prie
> Qu'el ne li fasse faire honte. (ll. 233-235)
> On her knees she cried for mercy from her; hands joined, she requested and besought that she not cause her shame.[523]

518(91) Le Prestre et Alison l. 115; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 287.

519(70) Les Sohait des Vez l. 179; (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 150.

520(15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons ll. 132, 195 M; (56) Frere Denise l. 233; (69) Les Tresces I l. 253; (94) Le Prestre qui dist la Passion l. 37; (117) La Nonete l. 219; (124) Trubert l. 371.

521(82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier ll. 181, 184. The word *merci* can occur in other phrases as well, such as in (69) Les Tresces I, in which the husband says to his adulterous wife, "Se ja mais ai de vos merci,/ Dont sui je honiz en terre!" (ll. 155-156: "If I ever have mercy on you , then I am well shamed in this land!").

522In the case of (16) La Housse partie II (l. 164), punishment is expected not from the offended party, the father, but from the grandson, and it threatens not immediately, but when the son is an old man himself.

523See also (69) Les Tresces I l. 253; (117) La Nonete l. 219; (124) Trubert l. 371. Cf. (106) Le fol Vilain, in which the foolish peasant, telling his wife how he has lost the*con* she entrusted to her care, likewise falls at her feet:

When used in a religious context to describe the mercy a sinner receives or hopes to receive from God, *merci*, like *pardoner* and *assolir*, most often is used in a rhetorical fashion, as when the old seamstress in (4) Auberee wishes that God have mercy on the soul of the recently departed wife:

> "Dieus soit o vos, ma douce dame,
> Et il eit hui merci de l'ame
> De l'autre dame qui est morte... (ll. 150-152)
> "God be with you, my sweet lady, and may he have mercy today on the soul of the other lady who died..."[524]

The phrases *Dieu merci* or *Jhesu merci* occur often in fabliaux dialogue, but seem to constitute little more than a meaningless oath or filler, as when the maidservant in (59) Le Foteor says, upon seeing that her mistress has admitted to the house the fornicator for hire, "Dieu merci, or avons bon oste!" (l. 214: "May God have mercy, now we have a good guest!").[525] The phrase *por Dieu merci* ("for God's sake, mercy) is likewise sometimes just a rhetorical statement or filler, as in (74) Le Sacristain III, in which *por Dieu merci* occurs with "pour l'amour Dieu" as a filler or oath:

> "Pour Dieu merci," dist l'uns des lerres,
> "Pour l'amour Dieu, comment qu'il voise,
> Ja en la vile n'en soit noise..." (ll. 450-452)
> "For God's sake mercy," said one of the robbers, "For the love of God, however it may go, let there never be in the village any noise of this..."[526]

More often, however, *por Dieu merci* is an appeal for mercy from the "Other" whom one has wronged. Again, other terms from the vocabulary of guilt often accompany the use of *por Dieu merci* in this context. The exchange between the disobedient wife and her outraged husband in (83) La Dame escoillee provides a good example:

> Se feme vait au piet caïr,
> Puis dist: "Mout me poés haïr,
> Car j'ai perdut vo Conebert..." (ll. 353-355)
> He fell at his wife's feet, then said, "You can hate me a lot, for I have lost your Conebert..."

524See also (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 287.

525See also (4) Auberee l. 174; (74) Le Sacristain III l. 340 (which uses just the word *merci*); (124) Trubert l. 1764.

526See also (74) Le Sacristain II l. 321.

"Or m'en repent, por Dieu, merci!"
-"Bele," ce dit li quens, "Par Dé,
Ja ne vos sera pardoné
Sanz le vostre chastiement!" (p. 108)

"Now I repent, for God's sake mercy." -"Beautiful lady," said the count, "By God, you will never be forgiven without your chastisement!"

In describing the desire to avoid punishment for some wrong done, *merci* in these contexts clearly indicates the experience of guilt.

The word *delivre* has several meanings, two of which pertain to the experience of guilt.[527] In its basic sense it means "to deliver." By extension, it can indicate "to deliver from evil, to save," as in (60) Le Chapelain in which the *conteur* comments on the judicial duel between two innocent men, "Mes Dieus les en deliverra,/ Si que li pueples lo verra" (ll. 314-315: "But God will save them, so that the people will see it"). *Delivre* can also indicate "to free of," and when it indicates being free of punishment it indicates the experience of guilt. In (74) Le Sacristain III, for instance, the baker Thomas, upon discovering the body of the monk in the house, announces to the rest of the household that they must act to *delivre* themselves so as not to be burned or hanged:

"Or nous convient veoir comment,
Fet dans Thoumas, que nous puissons
Delivrer nous, que ne soions
Par cest afaire ars ne pendus. (ll. 545-548)

"Now we must see," said sir Thomas, "how we can be freed, so that we will not be burned or hanged as a result of this affair."[528]

Delivre can be applied to freedom from punishment in the afterlife as well, as in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre in which the dying priest says he has willed his crops and livestock to his relatives and the poor of the village "Por ce ke je soie delivres/ De ce k'ai envers iaus mespris" (ll. 95-96: "So that I may be freed from what wrong I have done towards them").

Delivre is also used to describe being freed from punishment as a result of making payment for a wrong done. Hence the priest in (111) Le Testament de l'Asne tells the bishop that his ass has left him 20 pounds "Pour ce qu'il soit d'enfer delivres" (l. 156: "So that he may be freed from hell"), and the nobleman asks the friar in (56) Frere Denise who has seduced a young girl if he would like to be *delivre* of the affair by paying 400 pounds:

527See Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

528See also (74) Le Sacristain II l. 812.

"Frere," dit il, "Voleiz vos estre
De cest afaire toz delivres?
Porchaciez tost quatre cenz livres
A marier la damoizele!" (ll. 276-279)

"Brother," he said, "Do you want to be freed from this affair? Pay 400 pounds right away, [as dowry] in order for the girl to marry."

Delivre in the sense of "to deliver, to hand over to" can also indicate the opposite, being delivered over *to* punishment rather than delivered *from* punishment. In this sense as well, of course, the word again indicates the experience of guilt. In (124) Trubert, the duke's men are said to have delivered (*delivré*) Trubert over for punishment for having wronged the duke in so many ways:

Aus justices l'ont delivré.
Li seneschaus a commandé
Que traïnez soit et penduz:
"Si li ert son loier renduz
De ce qu'il a monseigneur fet!" (ll. 1636-1640)

They delivered him over to punishment. The seneschal commanded that he be dragged and hanged: "So his recompense will be rendered for what he did to my lord!"

The word *livre* in the fabliaux, like *delivre*, can likewise indicate "to hand over for punishment." In (102) Le Prestre comporté, the tavernkeeper tells the thieves that they will all be "Livrés... a grant escil" (l. 699: "Delivered over to much torment") if the thieves do not dispose of the body of the dead man. In (1) Estormi, *delivre* is used in one line to indicate being freed *from* punishment for a crime, the murder of a priest, and *livre* in the next line to describe being handed over *to* punishment:

Et Jehans dist ja ne verra
L'eure qu'il en soit delivrez:
"J'en serai a honte livrez
Ainz demain a l'avesprement" (ll. 434-437)

And Jehan said that he will never see the hour that he will be freed from it: "I will be delivered over to shame for it before nightfall tomorrow."

The context in which *delivre* is used, whether it indicates being delivered over to or from punishment, often contains other terms from the vocabulary of guilt, such as *coupe*, *meffait*, *pechié*, *mesprendre*, *amender*, and *justice*, or terms indicating accusation, such as *accuser*, *blamer*, and *clamer*.

The adjective *quite* indicates "free from obligation or claim."[529] It can be used outside the context of guilt,[530] but when the obligation or claim that is forgiven is punishment owed for a wrongdoing, *quite* can be an indicator of guilt. The peasant in (102) Le Prestre comporté who thinks he has killed a priest says that he would willingly suffer great pain in order to be *quite* of the offense: "Grans ahans en vorrai soufrir,/ Pour tant que jou quites en soie" (ll. 520-521: "I would suffer great pain to be quit of this"). The cuckolded husband in (14) Aloul twice uses the word to refer to the priest who cuckolded him and then eludes capture: "s'en ira il donc quites?" (l. 32: "Will he get away with it scot-free?"), he exclaims to his cowherds, and then later, he says to his household, "Quites? deable! .../ Et je remaindrai ci si cous?" (ll. 745-746: "Free? The devil! ... And will I remain cuckolded here?"). *Quite* occurs in a religious context in the same fabliaux, when the priest, in the example cited above, parodies the granting of absolution as he strikes down one of the cowherds: "...levez sus: / Cuites estes et absolus,/ Ne sai doner autres pardons" (ll. 878-880: "Get up: you are freed and absolved, I do not know how to grant other pardon").

The expression *clamer quite* indicates renouncing an obligation or claim.[531] It can be used outside the context of guilt,[532] but when it indicates renouncing a claim in court that would have entailed receiving some kind of payment or restitution from the perpetrator of an offense, it is an indicator of the experience of guilt. The expression occurs in this sense in the fabliaux in only one instance, in (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier. The man who makes a claim against his rescuer for putting out his eye while saving him from drowning is told by the court fool that the case should be settled by placing the man in the water again and having his rescuer attempt the rescue once more. If the rescue can be accomplished without injury to the drowning man, the fool states, then recompense should be made to him. All laugh at the solution, and the man then renounces his claim: "Le preudome a quite clamé" (l. 65). While not indicating forgiveness, the renunciation of a claim for injury still bespeaks a wrong done which could have been punished and hence suggests the experience of guilt.

529Godefroy; Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

530See for example (30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue I l. 89; (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux l. 351; (124) Trubert l. 990.

531Greimas; Tobler-Lommatzsch.

532(103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 516, 1146, 1157, 1260, 1305, 1334.

Hence a variety of terms are used to indicate being freed or forgiven of the debt owed to the "Other;" most are not related. To be *quite* of an obligation or claim indicated the experience of guilt if that of which one was *quite* was the debt of punishment, and to be *delivre* (saved from or handed over to) could indicate guilt if that from which one was delivered or to which one was handed over was punishment. *Merci* was frequently employed when characters expected punishment. Both *pardoner* and *absolier* in essence indicated forgiveness for a wrong done, but *absolier* was used only in a religious context and appears infrequently. Interestingly, when the context in which *pardoner*, *absolier* and *merci* are used is religious, often the terms are relatively meaningless rhetorical fillers or else are used in a parody of the sacrament of confession.

The Semantic Network of Guilt

The semantic network that links the various terms indicating the experience of guilt is illustrated in Figure 2.5. The links are for the most part straight-forward and hardly surprising. Being guilty is linked to the act of blaming and accusing, both of which are expressed by some variant of *cope*. Terms linked to the sacrament of penance, such as *penance*, *pardoner*, and *merci*, are also associated with the act of punishment: *penance* normally indicated punishment for an act of wrongdoing, sometimes even outside the sacrament of penance, and both *pardoner* and *merci* were normally used in situations in which punishment was pending. To harm or injure another was expressed by terms such as *mesfaire*, *mesprendre vers*, *avoir tort vers* and *faire tort*, which were more specific variants of expressions indicating wrongdoing in general such as *mesprendre* and *avoir tort*. In contrast, a very different set of expressions, *damage*, *anuier* and *grever*, indicated the harm, injury or hurt that accompanied being shamed. Such terms were frequently used in situations which subsequently merited revenge; *damage*, *anui* and *anuier* could also indicate shameful punishments which were in essence revenge. The various terms indicating punishment are linked to juridicial terms by virtue of the fact that punishment, and not the assessment of guilt, was the usual aim of court proceedings. There is a close link between punishment, recompense, and vengeance; some of the same terms express the three concepts, and all occur both within and outside formal juridic contexts. As mentioned above, taking a person to court could be, in fourteenth century France, just another form of exacting vengeance.[533] The close vocabulary links between revenge and court-sanctioned punishment

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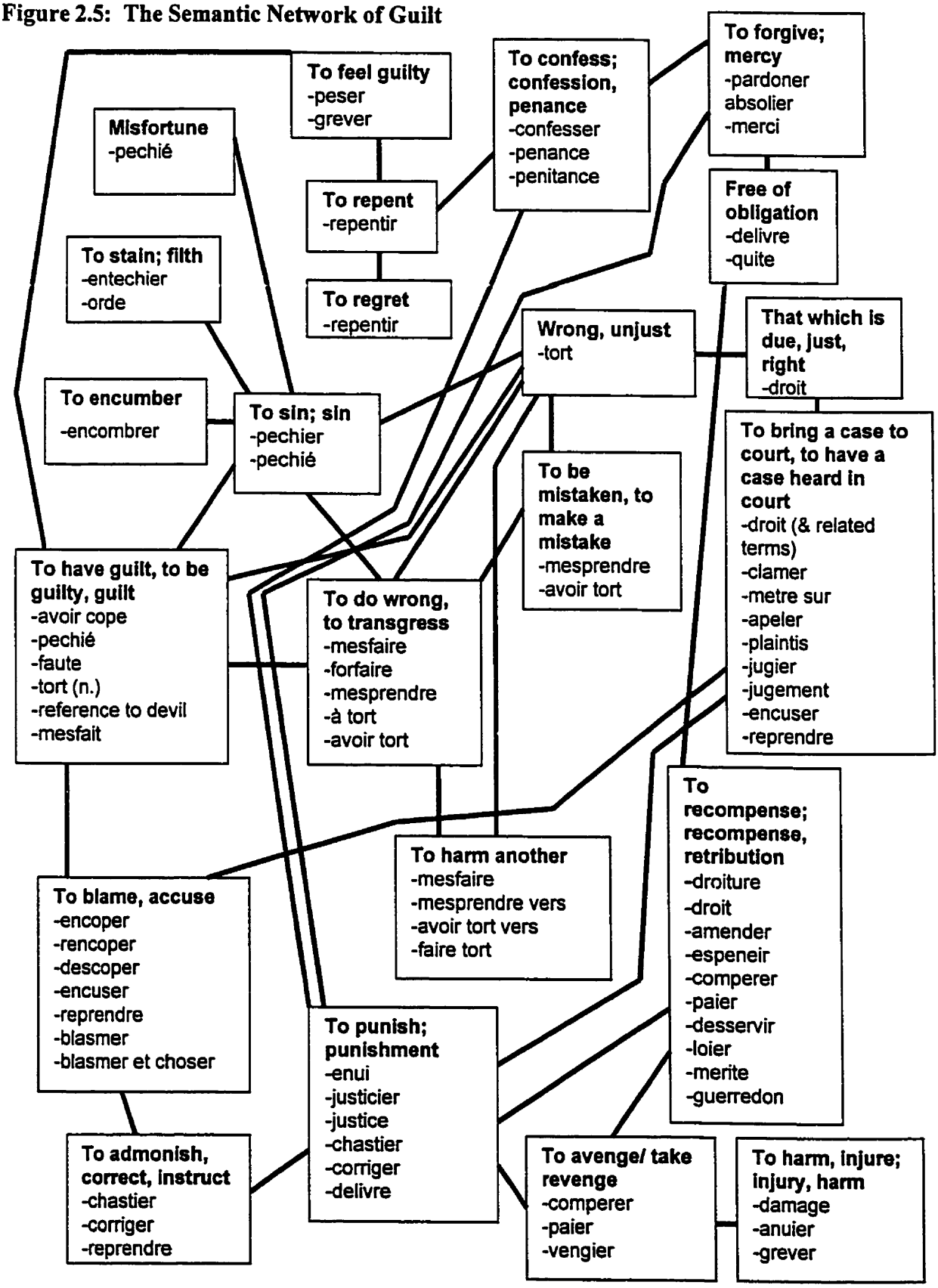
[533]Lanhers 329.

Figure 2.5: The Semantic Network of Guilt



would seem to bear this out.

What is perhaps most interesting about the semantic network of the vocabulary of guilt is the lack of distinctions between what we would normally demarcate as distinct spheres of experience. We have seen that terms such as *pechié*, *pardoner*, and *merci* are frequently used outside the context of the sacrament of penance and indeed are used more often to describe disruptions in the relationship between characters than between individuals and God. Most of the legal terms describing the act of making a claim against an individual and assigning a punishment in court, such as *encuser*, *reprendre*, *clamer*, *apeler*, *jugier*, and *justicier*, are likewise often applied in non-legal contexts to describe accusations of wrongdoing, decisions regarding who should pay recompense, and the act of punishing. There are a few words that are applied solely in one context or another, but these words all appear very infrequently: *espeneir* (to expiate), *absolier* (to absolve), *confesser* and *confession*, and *penance* and *penitance* appear only with reference to sin or confession, and *droitoier* (to recount one's actions before a court of justice) and *plaintis* (an adjective indicating complainant) are used only in the context of formal legal action. The specificity and infrequency with which these terms are applied may reflect, in the case of the sacrament of penance, the relatively late date at which the laity were being educated regarding the sacrament of penance, a concerted effort at which was made only following the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 and its mandate of annual confession for all adults.[534]

Conclusion, Chapter 2

A. Where Shame and Guilt Intersect

Figure 2.6 illustrates the nexuses at which the vocabulary of shame and guilt intersect. Concepts which appertain more generally to shame appear on the left side of the illustration, and those pertaining more to guilt appear on the right. Terms relating to revenge appear in the center

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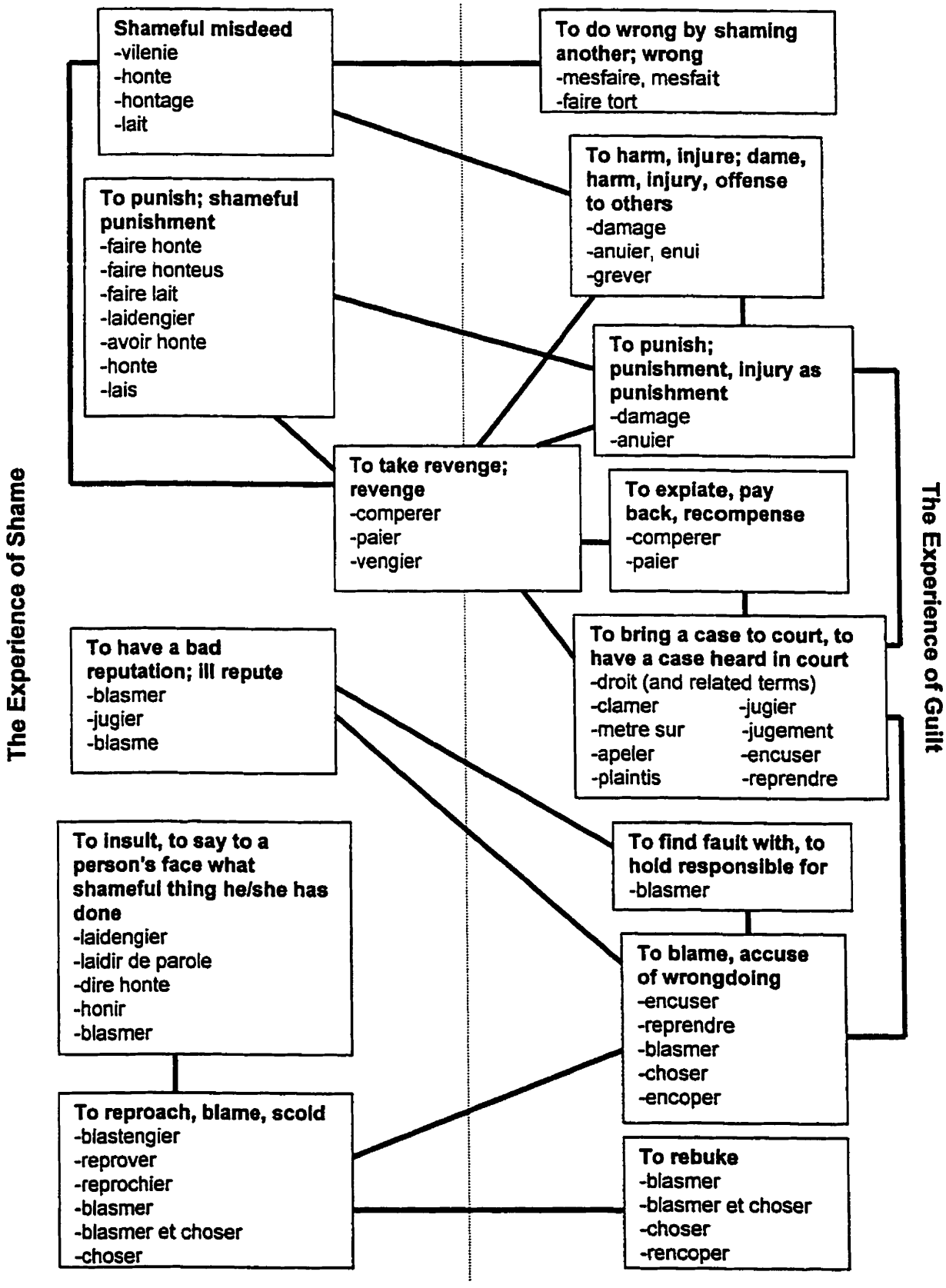
534As mentioned above, the legal system as well underwent a significant change but at a somewhat later date. The inquisitorial process based on written records and conducted in Latin, and under the influence of canon and Roman law, gradually replaced the earlier Germanic method of trial by ordeal, but this change became widespread in France only in the latter years of the thirteenth century. Both *plaintis* and *droitoier* could be used to describe actions under either the Germanic or the inquisitorial system. As these terms each appear only once in the fabliaux, however, it is not possible to argue that the specificity with which these terms are applied is related to the late date at which the newer legal system came into widespread use.

Figure 2.6: Where Shame and Guilt Intersect



of the diagram, as they appertain to both realms of experience. As can be seen, the relationship between the two can be complex and exists at several different levels. To say to someone's face what shameful thing he or she has done or to reproach or scold a person for some wrong he or she has committed are status-diminishing events and are described by terms from the vocabulary of shame. At the same time, to be blamed or accused of wrongdoing pertains to the experience of guilt when the emphasis is placed on the wrong done, when the accusation leads to court proceedings, or when the rebuke is itself a form of punishment. Some of the same words, such as *blasmer* and *choser*, are used to describe both the shame and the guilt involved in blaming, accusing and reproaching. *Blasmer* could also indicate being held responsible for a misdeed, part of the experience of guilt; as well, this term could indicate having a bad reputation, which pertained to the experience of shame. Being blamed or accused of wrongdoing could also constitute the initial step in court proceedings, which pertained more to the experience of guilt. The terms used to describe wrongdoings or misdeeds could likewise pertain both to shame and guilt. Words such as *mesfait*, *mesfaire* and *faire tort* described the act of harming another or doing wrong, but these same words were often paired with words such as *honte*, *hontage*, and *vilenie* to describe wrongful acts such as adultery that were also inherently shameful, or, in the language of psychologists, acts which incurred "moral shame," feelings of diminished status resulting from violating rules or norms of behavior. *Mesfait*, *mesfaire* and *faire tort* are also used to describe misdeeds that harmed the victim by shaming him or her. Terms such as *damage*, *anuier*, and *enui* likewise could pertain to the experience of guilt in describing the harm or injury caused by an offense, and, especially when paired with *honte* and *lait*, as they often were, could appertain to the experience of shame by denoting the damage or offense caused by such status-diminishing offenses as being propositioned, insulted or cuckolded. Interestingly, these terms denoting offenses were also used to describe punishments, and again both in the realm of shame and guilt. *Damage*, *anuier* and *enui* could denote the injuries suffered by characters who are being punished for some wrongdoing, which appertains to the experience of guilt, and they are also often paired with *honte* and *lais* to describe injuries and deaths that were shameful. Punishments in turn were often linked to revenge, and often it is difficult to distinguish the two. The situations in which punishment and revenge occur are identical, and the words typically used to indicate punishment are often accompanied by terms from the vocabulary of shame that describe exacting punishment as a way to preserve one's honor. Even the kinds of injuries described by terms from the vocabulary of shame are identical to the punishments administered

within the context of guilt: beatings, maiming and killing are described in various fabliaux by the terms *honte*, *honir*, *lait* and *laidengier*, and are also presented as the punishment meted out for misdeeds. As well, terms used to describe taking revenge are often accompanied by expressions from the vocabulary of guilt. Other links with the concept of revenge also exist. The word *grever*, denoting "to harm, to hurt," often occurs in situations in which the character who is hurt seeks restitution through revenge. Most often, of course, it is misdeeds that cause shame to the victim that are subsequently avenged. Court proceedings as well are linked both to shame and guilt. Taking a character to court could be a form of revenge, and the act of accusing a person was closely linked with verbal denunciations that were in essence intended to shame a character in front of others. Often it is difficult to ascertain whether a character who is threatened with being blamed or accused of wrongdoing is being threatened with court action or with the simple revelation of the misdeed to others.

As noted above in the discussion of the individual vocabulary terms, historical realities explain many of these links. Punishment and shaming were closely linked historically, as many punishments in medieval France entailed shaming rituals ranging from exposure in the pillory to being paraded naked through town, exposed to the blows and insults of all.[535] Being brought to court and publicly accused of wrongdoing were inherently shameful in a setting in which individuals were tried largely on the basis of reputation and social standing[536] and being accused of criminal activity was considered extremely shameful.[537] The predominantly Germanic character of the court system in France well into the later Middle Ages meant that punishments were a form of vengeance that restored the victim's honor as much as they restored the balance in the relationship between the victim and the offender. Not until the fourteenth century do court records mention correcting the offender as the reason behind the punishments administered;[538] as noted above, as late as the second half of the thirteenth century, fines were termed "venjances" in

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535See Chapter 1, n. 55.

536Lavoie, "Justice, criminalité et peine de mort" 54.

537Patricia Hogan, "The Slight of Honor: Slander and Wrongful Persecution in Five English Medieval Villages," Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, n.s. 12 (1991): 20-21. Cf. Gauvard, "Violence citadine et réseaux de solidarité" 1125-1126.

538Lavoie, "Justice, morale et sexualité" 9-21.

customaries such as the *Coutumes de Beauvaisis.*[539]

B. The Relative Importance of Shame and Guilt

While the number of expressions used to indicate guilt is large, the range of expressions used to indicate shame is broader. Shame is described not only by terms indicating diminished status and baseness but also by expressions from other realms of experience, such as terms describing staining, soiling, or filth, and expressions indicating punishment. Guilt in contrast is described only by terms which of necessity must indicate guilt given its definition: terms denoting misdeeds, transgressions, offenses, recompense, forgiveness and punishment. That the range of expressions used in the fabliaux is limited is evident when compared to the wide range of expressions used in Old French moral and didactic literature. Yedlicka catalogs a huge variety of images that are used in the vernacular to describe contrition and penance: the eating of the heart by the worm of remorse, the breaking or crushing of the hardened heart, the vomiting of sins, the cleaning of the heart, taking the medicine of contrition against the poison of sin, the beating of laundry, staining, the waging of a battle against the flesh, changing one's clothes, healing, a repayment of debt, cleaning house, turning from the road of perdition to the road of salvation, and making peace with God. The bad conscience is likened variously to a heart darkened with sorrow, a debt that remains unpaid, a soul in distress, a battle in one's heart, and an inflammation or crushing of the conscience. Sin is likened to filth, stains, mortal wounds, and an ardent fire.[540] As we saw above, in the fabliaux such imagery is rare. In one instance sin is described as something which stains (*entechier*) a person and in another instance the adjective *orde* (filthy) is used to describe a lascivious friar. The verb *encombrer* occurs four times to describe sin as something which encumbers a person. No other such images are used, however.

Many of the images identified by Yedlicka are concerned with healing or conversion. Interestingly, terms denoting correcting or instructing the wrongdoer are again used rarely in the fabliaux. *Chastier* is the only term to appear with any frequency, but most often it appears to have the sense of "to chastise" rather than "to admonish" or "to instruct." This would seem to run counter to historical reality. The image of penance as a healing process, with the confessor as a

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539A portion of the fines levied was regularly assigned to the victim in the later Middle Ages. See Gonthier 229 and Bernadette Auzary, "Peine et réparation dans les rapports entre préposé et commettant devant le Parlement de Paris aux XIVe et XVe siècles," Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis 59.1-2 (1991): 97-109.

540Yedlicka *passim.*

spiritual doctor whose role was to diagnose illnesses and prescribe the appropriate remedies in terms of penance, was generally the predominant image in penitential literature pre-dating the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. A more juridical type of imagery which saw the priest as judge and penance as a legal penalty predominated in the post-Lateran period.[541] One might expect the medical imagery to appear more frequently in the fabliaux, given the date at which they were composed. However, what appears in fact to predominate in the fabliaux is the Germanic view of sin and guilt as meriting not so much healing or correction but revenge. In the fabliaux even God takes vengeance against the sinner,[542] and punishments are closely linked to the need for recompense, retribution and revenge.

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[541]Goering, "The Summa of Master Serlo."

[542]See (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 315, as discussed above.

Chapter 3: THE FEELINGS OF SHAME AND GUILT

While the fabliau genre is often said to lack detailed descriptions of feelings and emotional states simply because of its focus on action and dialogue,[1] nevertheless shame and guilt as feelings do appear with some frequency in the fabliaux. How and when they are portrayed as feelings can add to our understanding of the relative importance of each and also help reveal their linkages with other components of medieval culture. In this chapter I analyze in turn how the feelings of shame and guilt are described, with what gestures and forms of dialogue they are normally associated, and what types of characters typically experience the emotions and in what sorts of situations.

The Feeling of Shame

Shame as a feeling is described by the expressions noted above in Chapter 2: *honteus*, *avoir honte*, *vergoigne* and *avoir lait*. Several other feelings typically are associated with the feeling of shame. Often characters who experience the feeling of shame are described as astonished and confused. Social scientists describe this as a common reaction to the experience of shame, stemming at least in part from the fact that shame, unlike guilt, is unexpected.[2] Robreau in her study of honor and shame in the Lancelot-Grail cycle identifies this as a common reaction to the feeling of shame.[3] In the fabliaux the words *esbair*[4] (to astonish) and *esperdre*[5] (to

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[1]See Chapter 1, n. 64. See also Philippe Ménard, Les fabliaux: Contes à rire du Moyen Age, Littératures modernes 32 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983) 29-30; and Charles Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1986) ch. 3. Thomas Cooke, The Old French and Chaucerian Fabliaux (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978) notes that emotions as described in the fabliaux are limited in range, comprised primarily of "lust, carnal pleasure, and fear, frequently in just that order" (p. 197).

[2]Erving Goffman, Interaction Ritual (New York: Doubleday, 1967) 8, 47; Helen B. Lewis, Shame and Guilt in Neurosis (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1971) 89; Helen Merrell Lynd, On Shame and the Search for Identity (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1958) 24-25, 32-33, 64-71.

[3]Yvonne Robreau, L'Honneur et la honte: Leur expression dans les romans en prose du Lancelot-Graal (XII – XIIIe siècles) (Geneva: Librairie Droz,1981)163-164.

[4](2) Constant du Hamel l. 209; (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel l. 176; (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 292; l. 187 M; (17) Les Braies au Cordelier l. 281.

be bewildered) are the terms most frequently used to express this sentiment. Hence the husband in (69) Les Tresces I who has violently punished his wife for her adultery and then discovered what appears to be incontrovertible proof of her fidelity is said to suffer shame: "Li boriois ot honte" (l. 278 B: "The bourgeois felt shame") and then is described as bewildered and astonished: "Adonc s'espert et esbaist" (l. 289 B: "Then he was bewildered and astonished"). Other terms are also occasionally used. The word *mari*, meaning "lost, led astray; afflicted, sad," appears in (81) Le Prestre teint to describe the shame the priest suffers when the dyer's wife refuses his advances: "Molt a de ce le cuer mari" (l. 65: "He had a lost heart concerning this..."). In (17) Les Braies au Cordelier, the bourgeois who is humiliated by being revealed as a cuckold at the market is said almost to *forsaner*, or go out of his mind, and is also described as *conclus*, meaning confounded: "Par poi li borgois ne forsanne.../ Mout fu esbahiz et conclus... (ll. 275, 281: "The bourgeois almost went out of his mind...He was very astonished and confounded"). The butcher in (115) Les Braies le Priestre whose companions make fun of him when he discovers proof that he is a cuckold is described as *abaubis* (lost or bewildered): "Li bouciers fu plus abaubis/ Qu'entre dis leus une brebis" (ll. 101-102: "The butcher was more bewildered than a sheep among ten wolves"). An element of surprise is often conveyed by these terms; none of the characters who are described as confused or astonished expected to be shamed. Indeed the word *entrepris*, meaning surprised, is used to describe the hapless butcher in (115) Les Braies le Priestre: "Li boucier fu tous entrepris" (l. 89: The butcher was completely surprised").

Often the sentiment of confusion or astonishment is captured by expressions indicating a character is speechless or does not know what to do. Robreau in her study of honor and shame in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle notes that when characters are described as speechless, it is an indication of the intensity of the shame they are experiencing.[6] Such is also the case in the fabliaux. In one manuscript of (69) Les Tresces I, for instance, the husband is described as silent:

> Por cent livres ne deïst mot;
> Une grant piece an fu touz muz.
> Si durement fu esperduz
> Qu'il cuida par anchantement
> - Je le vos di apertement -

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[5](15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons l. 427; (69) Les Tresces I l. 243; (120) Le Sentier battu l. 87.

[6]Robreau 163.

Li fust avenu ceste chose! (ll. 241-246)
For one hundred pounds he would not have said a word; for a long time he was completely silent. So extremely bewildered was he that he thought it was through enchantment – I say this to you openly – that this thing had happened to him.

In version II the husband's reaction is described in terms of not knowing what to do: "mais il ne set mais que il face,/ Tant est dolenz et abosmez..." (ll. 395-396: But he does not know what to do any longer, he is so aggrieved and beaten..."). The husband in (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel I who is tied hand and foot by his neighbors after his wife has convinced them that he has lost his mind is said to be "si esbahi/ Que il ne sot qu'il peüst dire" (ll. 176-177: "so astonished that he did not know what he could say"). The peasant Constant in (2) Constant du Hamel, falsely accused by the priest during mass, in front of the other villagers, of having married a relative, is deeply shamed at being turned out of the church. He is described as speechless: "Tant fu esbahiz por la honte/ Que il ne set qu'il doie dire" (ll. 207-208: "He was so astonished on account of the shame that he did not know what he should say"). In (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne, the tavernkeeper who is treated like an insane man, held down by his fellow parishioners while a priest reads the gospel over his head, is likewise described as silent:

Et li bourgois s'est tous quois teus;
Courechiés fu mout et honteus
De ce k'ensi fu atrepés. (ll. 324-326)
And the bourgeois was completely and clearly quiet; he felt very indignant and shamed because he had been entrapped thus.

Sometimes the speechlessness that comes with shame is presented as the result of extreme anger. In (43) La Male Honte I, for instance, the king is said to be so angry upon being shamed by a peasant in his court that he does not know what to say or do:

Quant li rois l'ot, si ot tel rage
Avis li est que de duel arge:
Ne set que faire ne que dire.
Del vilain a tel dul et ire... (ll. 74-77)
When the king heard him, he was so enraged that it seemed to him that he burned from the grief: he did not know what to do or say. He had such grief and anger over the peasant...

The three men who seek to cuckold Constant in (2) Constant du Hamel but instead are tricked and forced to watch Constant rape each of their wives in turn mock one another as each is cuckolded. After the mockery, each is described as so angry that he is speechless:

Li prestres si fu si plains d'ire
Que il ne set qu'il doie dire
Du duel qu'il a et de la honte. (ll. 702-704)

Li prevoz par fu si plein d'ire
Qu'il ne set que il doie dire
Du duel qu'il ot et de la honte. (ll. 732-734)
Li forestiers fu si plains d'ire
Qu'il ne set que il doie dire... (ll. 764-765)

The priest was so full of anger that he did not know what he should say, on account of the sorrow and shame that he had. ... The provost was so full of anger that he did not know what he should say, on account of the sorrow and shame that he had. ... The forester was so full of anger that he did not know what he should say...

Related to the sentiment of confusion and bewilderment experienced by so many of the shamed characters in the fabliaux is a feeling of defeat. We saw above in Chapter 2 that one of the meanings of *honir* was "to defeat" and that the words with which "honir" are most commonly paired are words that indicate betrayal or defeat, such as "honiz et deceuz," "honiz et mate," "honi et confondu," and "honye et engyné." Many of these adjectives appear in conjunction with descriptions of the feeling of shame. The adjective *mate* (defeated) in particular appears with some frequency, as for example in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis in which the saints humiliated by the peasant are described as "taisans et mas" (l. 47) or "mournes et mas" (l. 107).[7] The adjective *abosmez*, meaning beaten, crushed, or overwhelmed, is also used to describe the feeling of shame. In (2) Constant du Hamel, for instance, Constant is described as *abosmez* when the priest humiliates him in church: "Lors fu Coutanz toz abosmez/ Que li prestres li dit tel honte" (ll. 205-206: "Then was Constant completely crushed that the priest said such a shameful thing to him").[8] Other words indicating defeat or trickery are also used. In (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel I, the husband who is treated like a madman by his neighbors and bound hand and foot is described as "bien ... matez et cunchiiez" (l. 180: "well defeated and tricked"). The word *desconfis* (broken, vanquished) is used in (115) Les Braies le Priestre to describe the discomfiture of the butcher when he is revealed as a cuckold at the market: "Trestous desconfis en revint" (l. 105: He returned, completely vanquished"). *Desconfis* is used also in (34) Berengier au lonc Cul to describe the peasant husband who is proven a coward by Sir Bérengier and is subsequently cuckolded:

Mout en ot grant duel et grant ire;

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[7]See also for example (34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 297 D; (115) Les Braies le Priestre l. 85.

[8]See also (34) Berengier au lonc Cul l. 271; (69) Les Tresces II l. 395.

Onques plus ne li osa dire,
Desconfit se sent et maté.
Et cele fait sa volanté... (ll. 291-294)

He was very sad and angry: he did not dare say anything more to her, he felt himself vanquished and conquered. And she did her will...[9]

Another common feeling suffered by characters who experience the feeling of shame is sorrow. Robreau identifies this as characteristic of the feeling of shame in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle as well.[10] Shamed characters in the fabliaux are often said to suffer *duel*[11] or to be *dolent*[12] or *morne*.[13] The butcher in (115) Les Braies le Priestre, revealed as a cuckold in the market before his companions, is said to be "batus d'un grief flaiiel" (l. 84). The shamed friars in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre depart from the scene of their humiliation "a triste chiere" (l. 309). The *conteur* in (120) Le Sentier battu carefully contrasts the sorrow of the noble woman who is insulted before a noble assembly with the joyful demeanor she demonstrated before the insult took place:

Or fu son cuer si esperdus
Que tout son deduit fu perdus
Et li fu sa joie faillie,
Car devant estoit baude et lie
Et mout plaine d'envoisement. (ll. 87-91)

Now was her heart so completely lost that all her pleasure was lost and her joy was gone, for before she had been joyous and happy and full of gaiety.

In many instances the heart is presented as the locus of the feelings accompanying the experience of shame. Hence the priest's mistress in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier says, "li cuers me deut/ De la honte que j'ai eüe" (ll. 1019-1020: "my heart grieves from the shame I have

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[9]This is clearly the sentiment of shame, as it has several of the characteristics of the sentiment of shame in addition to the feeling of defeat, including sorrow, anger, and speechlessness. In manuscript D, the equivalent of l. 291 reads "Mout en ot grant *honte* et grant ire" (l. 295 D; emphasis mine).

[10]Robreau 165-166.

[11](2) Constant du Hamel l. 704, 734; (43) La Male Honte I ll. 75, 77; (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 893, 939.

[12](69) Les Tresces II l. 395; (120) Le Sentier battu l. 113; (124) Trubert l. 729.

[13](39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis l. 107.

suffered"), and both the knight and the noble woman in (120) Le Sentier battu are said to suffer in their hearts after being insulted. The knight, it is said, "Pour la ramposne ot cuer dolent" (l. 113: "On account of the insult had a sorrowful heart"), and of the noble woman the *conteur* states, "Or fu son cuer si esperdus" (l. 87: "Now was her heart so completely lost"). The priest in (81) Le Prestre teint is likewise said to have "le cuer mari" (l. 65: "an afflicted heart") from being rejected by the dyer's wife.

A number of gestures and physical manifestations typically accompany the experience of shame.[14] The ones associated with the feeling of shame in the fabliaux are the same ones that anthropologists and psychologists have identified as typical of the experience of shame both in Western and other cultures: lowering the head, blushing, and blanching.[15] Sweating is associated with shame in some cultures.[16] Hence the Jacobins in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre who are shamed by the dying priest lower their heads: "Li Jacobin baisent les testes" (l. 307: "The Jacobins lowered their heads..."). The wife in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse who insists that she is innocent of adultery tells her husband that she will keep her head bowed before no one: "Je n'ai voisine ne voisin/ Por qui je port le chief enclin!" (ll. 263-264: "I have no neighbor before whom I carry my head down!"). After being publicly accused of marrying a relative and humiliated by being turned out of church, Constant in (2) Constant du Hamel is described as "Pales, decolorez, plains d'ire" (l. 209: "pale, having lost his color, full of anger"). The little nun in (117) La Nonete threatens to accuse the prioress of something which will make her face as red as silk: "...vremeil que soie,/ Je croi, vo visaige ferai/ Et tout vo fait acuserai (ll. 68-70: "...as red as silk, I believe, I will make your face, and I will accuse you of your entire (mis)deed").[17] Some shamed characters sweat, like the priest's procuress in (81) Le Prestre teint

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[14]Leo Charles Yedlicka in his study of repentance and remorse in Old French moral and didactic literature, Expressions of the Linguistic Area of Repentance and Remorse in Old French (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1945) pp. 380-383, identifies many of these gestures as typical of the expression of repentance and remorse. His analysis is hampered by his failure to make a distinction between shame and guilt.

[15]See for example H. Ian Hogbin, "Shame: A Study of Social Conformity in a New Guinea Village," Oceania 17 (1947): 278; Lewis 32-40.

[16]See for example A.J. Strathern, "Why is Shame on the Skin?" The Anthropology of the Body, ed. John Blacking, Association of Social Anthropologists Monograph 15 (London: Academic Press, 1977) 101.

[17]Cf. (42) Le Fevre de Creil ll. 92-99, in which the wife is described as first turning red, and then white, as her husband describes to her the size of his assistant's *vit*. According to the *conteur*, this

who is cursed and struck by the loyal wife: "De honte palist et tresue" (l. 172: "She blanched and sweated with shame").[18]

The most common physical reaction to the experience of shame is to retreat from the scene. Again, this is consistent with the experience of shame as described by anthropologists and psychologists concerning both Western culture and others. Shame typically entails the withdrawal of the shamed person, not so much as self-punishment for the shame-worthy offense as a way to express the isolating, alienating affect of shame.[19] In the fabliaux, the retreat or departure of the shamed person is sometimes necessitated by the plot, but always the *conteur* takes care to describe it. The priest refused by the dyer's wife in (81) Le Prestre teint, for instance, is described fleeing to his house: "Li prestres o tote sa honte/ S'en vet fuiant a son ostel" (ll. 55-56: "The priest with all his shame went fleeing to his house").[20] Often the verb *torner* and the adjective *honteus* are used to describe the act of departure. For instance, the relatives of Connebert, in the fabliaux of the same name [(77)], "s'an tornerent tuit honteus" (l. 86: "Depart all ashamed") after Connebert has denounced them for failing to help him take vengeance.[21]

The emotions and gestures associated with shame that I have discussed thus far are what many would regard as passive or submissive: being sad, feeling defeated, hanging one's head, retreating from the scene. One emotion that modern readers might regard as more "active" and that is often associated with the feeling of shame is anger. It is a common reaction to the experience of shame in the Lancelot-Grail cycle.[22] In the fabliaux, the majority of the characters

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oscillation in color is an indication of her sexual desire. Robreau, pp. 164-165, mentions only blushing as a typical accompaniment to the feeling of shame in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle.

[18]See also (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier ll. 993-994.

[19]A.L. Epstein, The Experience of Shame in Melanesia (London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1984) 40-44; Goffman 43; Hogbin 279; Lewis 32-40; Lynd 67; Susan Miller, The Shame Experience (Analytic Press, 1985) 37. Cf. Robreau 149-153. Robreau observes that in the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle, being dishonored often entails being isolated or excluded from the group.

[20](2) Constant du Hamel ll. 209-210; (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons ll. 191-192 M; (59) Le Foteor l. 135; (81) Le Prestre teint ll. 170-171; (127) Le Vescie a Prestre ll. 308-309.

[21]See also (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait l. 47.

[22]Robreau 166-167.

who are shamed become angry. Anger is most often expressed in the fabliaux by the words *ire* (anger), *irié* (angry), *s'irier* (to be furious),[23] *corocié* (irritated, provoked, furious), and *coroços*[24] (angered, enraged, indignant or distressed). Hence the cowardly knight Berengier in (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, upon realizing that his wife knows of his humiliation at the hands of a strange knight, reacts with *honte* and *ire*: "Mout en ot grant honte et grant ire" (l. 295 D: "He was very ashamed and angry").[25] Similarly the knights in (124) Trubert, offended and insulted when someone at their noble feast releases a loud fart, are said to be angry (*s'irier*) and the duke furious (*être coroços*):

> Li chevalier molt s'en aïrent,
> Mes ne sevent qui ce a fet:
> N'i a celui honte n'en ait;
> Nes li dus an fu corociez. (ll. 526-529)
>
> The knights were very angry, but they did not know who did this: there was no one who did not feel shame; even the duke was furious about this.

Mautalent, meaning irritation or anger, is also used to describe the feeling of anger that accompanies shame. In (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, for instance, when the husband learns that his wife has been cuckolding him for years and has even had an affair with his own nephew, he is described as wrinkling his nose from anger: "De mautalent le nez fronci" (l. 134: "In anger he wrinkled his nose") and shaking with *mautalent* and *ire*: "D'ire et de mautalent fremi" (l. 220: "He shook with irritation and anger").[26] *Rage* or rage is used in (43) La Male Honte I to express the anger of the king upon being shamed by a peasant before the assembled court: "Quant li rois l'ot, si ot tel rage/ Avis li est que de duel arge" (ll. 74-75: "When the king heard, he was so enraged that it seemed to him that he would burn from the grief"). The

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[23]In addition to the examples provided, see also (2) Constant du Hamel ll. 209, 702, 732, 764; (17) Les Braies au Cordelier l. 291; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 217, 220; (43) La Male Honte I ll. 45, 77, 82; II l. 45; (124) Trubert l. 729, 1314.

[24](2) Constant du Hamel ll. 708, 738; (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne l. 325; (74) Le Sacristain II ll. 71, 74; (124) Trubert ll. 709, 728.

[25]Manuscript B, used as the basis of the critical text, has instead: "Mout en ot grant duel et grant ire" (l. 291 B). See above, n. 9.

[26]See also (59) Le Foteor l. 135; (115) Les Braies le Priestre l. 90; (124) Trubert l. 710.

related sentiment of *angoisse*, which can be translated as torment, anguish or anger,[27] is experienced by Saint Paul when he is humiliated by a quick-tongued peasant in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait: "Saint Pols en ot honte et angoisce" (l. 106: "Saint Paul was shamed and anguished"). What a character says can also bespeak the sentiment of anger. Characters who react to a shaming experience by violently insulting the person who has humiliated them can be understood as angry. The friars in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre, for instance, hurl insults at the priest who has tricked them and humiliated them before the civic officials.

> -"Nos aveis vos ci por dechoivre
> Mandeis, foz prestres entesté?
> Avoir nos cuidiés ahonteis,
> Mais nen aveis, par saint Obert,
> Bien nos teneis or por bobert! (ll. 291-295)
> -"You sent for us in order to deceive (us), you foolish imbecile?
> You thought to shame us, but you have not, by Saint Obert, well do
> you consider us idiots!

Despite their protest to the contrary, their words clearly indicate the anger that comes from shame.[28]

A number of social scientists have observed that anger is a common reaction to the experience of shame. Among some peoples, such as the Lakalai of Melanesia, the feelings of anger and shame are seen as opposites. People are commonly typed as either men of anger, quick to take offense and exact vengeance, or men of shame, passive individuals prone to feelings of shame.[29] The feelings of anger and shame are not mutually exclusive, however; even in Lakalai society men of anger can suffer shame, albeit for briefer periods and with much less frequency. Some social scientists regard shame as a feeling of anger directed towards the self as opposed to the other. According to many social scientists, the feeling of shame is relieved by anger, by an attack on the person or persons who have attempted to undermine one's status.[30]

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[27]A.J. Greimas, Dictionnaire de l'ancien français jusqu'au milieu du XIVe siècle (Paris: Larousse, 1980).

[28]The rapid volley of insults exchanged between the chambermaid and her mistress in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville provides another example.

[29]C.A. Valentine, "Men of Anger and Men of Shame," Ethnology 2 (1963) 441-477.

[30]Franz Alexander, "Remarks about the Relation of Inferiority Feelings to Guilt Feelings," International Journal of Psychoanalysis 19 (1938) 44; Epstein 20, 40-44; Miller 128, 134; Gerhart Piers and Milton B. Singer, Shame And Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and a Cultural Study (New York:

In the fabliaux the more passive emotions associated with shame, such as sorrow, confusion, and defeat, most often occur in conjunction with the sentiment of anger. In virtually every instance in which words indicating the anger that comes from shame occur, words indicating more passive sentiments are also used. For instance, the tavernkeeper in (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne in the passage cited above is described as silent, angry, and very ashamed: "Et li bourgois s'est tous quois teus;/ Courechiés fu mout et honteus" (ll. 324-325: "And the bourgeois was completely and clearly quiet; he felt very indignant and shamed"). The duke, unintentionally shamed by his wife in (124) Trubert, is described as "touz corociez,/ Et toz iriez et toz dolenz" (ll. 728-729: "Angry and completely furious and very sorrowful"). Indeed, often the *conteur* appears to pile on the emotions in a sort of *amplificatio*[31] of sentiments. Hence the peasant Constant in (2) Constant du Hamel, humiliated by being turned out of church, experiences feelings of confusion, defeat, and anger:

> Lors fu Coutanz toz abosmez
> Que li prestres li dit tel honte.
> Tant fu esbahiz por la honte
> Que il ne set qu'il doie dire.
> Pales, descolorez, plains d'ire,
> S'en est fors du mostier issuz... (ll. 205-210)
>
> Then was Constant completely crushed that the priest said such a shameful thing to him. He was so astonished on account of the shame that he did not know what he should say. Pale, discolored, full of anger, he left the church...

* * *

The feelings, gestures and physical accompaniments to the feeling of shame in the fabliaux can be catalogued thus: feelings of astonishment and confusion, most often denoted by *esbair*, *esperdre* or phrases indicating a character does not know what to say or do; feelings of defeat or being crushed, most often described by *mat* and *abosmé*; feelings of sorrow or grief, most often specified by *duel*, *dolent* and *morne*; feelings of anger, most often denoted by *ire*,

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W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1971) 38; Strathern 105; Leon Wurmser, The Mask of Shame (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981) 27-29.

[31] A rhetorical device described by the very popular Poetria Nova by Geoffrey of Vinsauf. See Ernest Gallo, The Poetria Nova and Its Sources in Early Rhetorical Doctrine (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1971).

corrocier, *mautalent* and their derivatives; the physical gesture of lowering one's head and the act of departing from the scene of humiliation; and the appearance of sweating, blanching, blushing or changing one's color. These accompaniments to the feeling of shame are so consistently associated with it that they can in fact can be used as indicators of the feeling of shame when the explicit terms indicating the feeling, such as *honteus*, *avoir honte*, *vergoigne* and *avoir lait*, are absent. If these accompaniments to the feeling of shame are coupled with situational indicators of the experience of shame, such as being mocked, ridiculed, insulted, laughed at, or having one's misdeeds revealed to others, then it is clear that the situation describes the experience of shame. A few examples will suffice. The tavernkeeper in (76) La Plantez insults (*ranpone*) the Norman for being upset over some spilt wine. The Norman responds with anger:

> Li Normanz l'ot; ne li sist mie
> Que li tavernier lo ranpone,
> Ainz voldroit mialz estre a Espone
> Qu'il nel corost, commant qu'il aille. (ll. 44-47)
>
> The Norman heard him: it did not suit him at all that the tavernkeeper insulted him; he would rather have been at Épone than not get angry about it, no matter what happened.

Clearly the Norman is experiencing the anger that comes with being shamed. Likewise in (74) Le Sacristain III, the anger of the sacristan's companion over the sacristan's failure to respond to his greeting ("li moin s'aïre" l. 303) may be understood as the product of the monk's shame at being treated discourteously. The vicious insults which the seneschal hurls at the peasant in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet can be viewed as the result of the shame the seneschal experiences when he sees a person so unkempt and plainly of such low status entering his lord's court for a feast. The seneschal is described as "Boursouflés, coureceus, plains d'ire" (l. 105: "Swollen, furious, full of anger"). His reaction after he in turn is insulted by the peasant is again the sentiment of shame: he blushes and does not know what to do as all laugh at the humiliation he receives:

> Li seneschaus ne set que face,
> Qui sa main tenoit a sa face,
> Qui durement li frist et cuit.
> Ce qu'il les voit rire li nuit. (ll. 227-230)
>
> The seneschal did not know what to do; he held his hand to his face, which was cruelly burning and scalding. That he saw them laughing at him hurt him.

The wife in (51) Les deus Changeors whose lover in jest reveals her naked body (excepting her face) bit by bit to her husband likewise has a typical shame reaction, feeling angry, sorrowful,

and leaving quickly: "De soi chaucier ne fu pas lente;/ Mout fu coroucie et dolente" (ll. 127-128: "She was not slow to put on her shoes; she was very angry and sorrowful"). That she in turn shames her lover by proving him a coward in front of her husband shows she is taking vengeance for a shameful affront. The squire in (37) La vieille Truande has a shame reaction when a noble man coming from court tells the squire that he must either sleep with the old beggar woman in front of them all or acknowledge her as his mother and carry her across the river: "Adonc ot li vallés grant ire,/ Ne sot que faire ne que dire" (ll. 193-194: "Then the valet was so angry that he did not know what to say or do"). When he finally acknowledges her as his mother, embraces her, and gives her his cape, the company laughs and he departs vanquished (*desconfis*): "Et cius s'en va tous desconfis" (l. 222: "And this one departed all vanquished").[32]

An appreciation for the emotions and physical manifestations of the feeling of shame can help correct what in my mind are some misreadings of the fabliaux and other works of literature as well. Characters who exhibit anger in circumstances in which they are clearly being shamed have been wrongly interpreted by modern literary critics as experiencing disappointment,[33] reacting to guilt[34] or exhibiting churlish behavior.[35] The silence and withdrawal of female

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[32]The word *honir* is used earlier in the fabliau when the valet first meets the woman and claims she is his mother. He exclaims,

> -"Vois," fait il, "Por le geule Diu,
> Sui bien honis! A ci boin giu,
> Quant ceste laide vielle torce
> Se fait me mere tot a force:
> Pres va que jou ne l'escervele!" (ll. 129-133)
>
> -"Bah," he said, "By God's throat, I am well shamed! This is a good game, when this twisted ugly old woman makes herself my mother completely by force: I almost go out of my mind!"

Other examples in which the feelings that accompany shame can be taken as indicative of the experience of shame include: the butcher in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, described as sitting down "Par molt grant ire.../ Dolenz et tristres et pensis" (ll. 465-466: "With great anger...sorrowful and sad and pensive") and "Molt corocié et eschaufez" (l. 479: "very angry and heated up") when he discovers he has been cuckolded; the squire in (93) Guillaume au Faucon who is "molt...esbahi" (l. 306) when the object of his affections, the wife of his lord, rejects his advances; and the husbands of the three women in (122) Les trois Dames de Paris who feel *duel*, *ire* and *courouz* when they see their wives lying naked in the streets, apparently dead. They are experiencing not only grief over the fact that the women appear to be dead, but the anger that comes from the humiliating fact that their wives are naked for all to see (ll. 206, 218).

[33]Cooke, p. 123, states that the anger of the friars in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre "is a result of their great disappointment; they had expected so much and had been given so little."

[34]Bernard Williams, Shame and Necessity (Berkeley, California, 1993) 90 ff.

characters who have been shamed in the fabliaux has been interpreted as symbolic of the success of the men who have silenced them and re-established the "natural" order in which men possess power, knowledge, rationality and a voice.[36] In fact, the silence of these women is shared by men as well who have been shamed.

Shame and Character

Robreau in her study of the works of the Lancelot-Grail cycle observes that it is often only the heroes who feel the sentiment of shame and that experiencing the feeling is an indication of nobility of heart. Only Lancelot, for example, says he would be ashamed if he did not essay one of the trials presented to the knights.[37] In the fabliaux, such does not appear to be the case. Shame is experienced by characters of all ranks, ranging from the peasant in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait to the outraged king in (43) La Male Honte. More interestingly, most of the characters in the fabliaux who experience the feeling of shame are the antagonists, the duped and reprehensible characters with whom the audience has little sympathy, such as the cowardly husband in (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, the greedy friars duped by the priest in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre, or the mean seneschal in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet. In those few instances in which a protagonist suffers shame, he or she always exacts vengeance later. Thus the priest's mistress in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, shamed by being forced to sleep with another man, avenges herself by thoroughly berating him, a scolding which the priest describes as her effort to *vengier* herself (l. 1023) on him. The peasant Constant in (2) Constant du Hamel wreaks a terrible vengeance against the priest who has humiliated him in church and the other two men who sought to cuckold him, raping each of their wives in turn and chasing the men through the village, where they are attacked by dogs.

That the feeling of shame is associated more with the duped and reprehensible characters of the fabliaux is made especially evident in those fabliaux in which both the antagonist and the

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[35]Larry D. Benson, "The Meaning," Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and The Green Knight (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 207-248.

[36]E. Jane Burns, "This Prick Which Is Not One: How Women Talk Back in Old French Fabliaux," Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature, ed. Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 188-212.

[37]Robreau 161.

protagonist experience the sentiment of shame. The protagonists either react with more anger to the shaming or their emotional reaction is not described in as much detail. For example, when the butcher in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville is refused lodging for the night by an arrogant priest who states that he does not lodge anyone who is lay or "vilains," the butcher's emotional reaction is primarily one of anger:

> -"Deable i puise remainoir,"
> Dist le bouchier, "Fous chapeleins!
> Pautonnier estes et vileins!"
> A tant s'en va, ne veut plus dire,
> Tot corocié et tot plein d'ire. (ll. 90-94)
>
> -"A devil can stay here," said the butcher, "False chaplain! You are a scoundrel and peasant!" At that he left, he did not want to say anything else, he was full of much anger and rage.

In contrast to the butcher's reaction, when the priest discovers that the butcher has slept with both his mistress and his maidservant, his emotional reaction is described in more passive terms:

> Par molt grant ire s'est asis,
> Dolenz et tristres et pensis.
> Et quant la dame iré le voit... (ll. 465-467)
> Li prestre sist sor un bançon,
> Molt corocié et eschaufez. (ll. 478-479)
>
> The priest sat down angrily, aggrieved and sad and pensive. When the lady saw he was angry... ... The priest sat on a bench, very angry and heated up...

In (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait, both the protagonist, a good peasant who has just died, and the antagonists, the saints Peter, Thomas and Paul, all suffer the shame of being insulted. The peasant, who is told by each saint in succession that he can not enter heaven on account of his peasant origins, reacts only with anger to their insults. He bitterly castigates each of the three saints in turn, reminding them of their failings in life and showing how he is the better Christian. The saints, as antagonists, respond to *his* insults not with anger but with shame:

> Sains Pieres ot estrange honte;
> Tornés s'en est taisans et mas. (ll. 46-47)
> Sains Tumas fu lués recreans
> De tenchier et basce le col... (ll. 74-75)
> Sains Pols en ot honte et angoisce:
> Tornés s'en est mornes et mas. (ll. 106-107)
>
> Saint Peter felt greatly ashamed; he turned away, silent and humiliated. ... St. Thomas at once declined to continue the argument and lowered his head ... Saint Paul felt ashamed and anguished: he turned away sad and humiliated.

Similarly in (120) Le Sentier battu both the protagonist, a young knight, and the antagonist, an

arrogant noble woman, are described experiencing the sentiment of shame, but the shame the antagonist feels is described in somewhat more detail and appears to be more intense. The shame the young knight experiences when the lady first insults him is mixed with a desire to exact vengeance:

> Le chevalier qui ce oÿ
> De ces mos point ne s'esioÿ:
> Esbahis fu et ne dist mot... (ll. 57-59)
> Pour la ramposne ot cuer dolent,
> Si ot de soi vengier talent. (ll. 113-114)
>
> The knight who heard this was not gladdened by these words: he was abashed and did not say a word... On account of the insult his heart was sad; he desired to avenge himself.

The shame experienced by the antagonist, the noble woman, when she is insulted in turn is painted in more unpleasant terms, with the adjective *forment* qualifying the adjective *honteuse*. No words indicating anger are used:

> ...cele en fu forment honteuse... (l. 83)
> Or fu son cuer si esperdus
> Que tout son deduit fu perdus
> Et li fu sa joie faillie,
> Car devant estoit baude et lie
> Et mout plaine d'envoisment. (ll. 87-91)
>
> She was very ashamed... Now was her heart so distraught that all her pleasure was lost and joy had failed her, for before she had been bold and joyful, full of gaiety.[38]

As we saw above in Chapter 2, failing to be avenged when one has something shameful done to him or her is to remain shamed. Indeed, anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers, in studying Mediterranean cultures, has noted that failing to exact vengeance when shamed leaves one's honor "in a state of desecration" and further diminishes one's status by showing oneself to be a

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[38]See also (37) La vieille Truande, in which the *conteur* does not describe the emotional reaction of the old beggar lady to the insults of the proud squire. When she subsequently manages to dupe him by forcing him to admit before a noble man and his company that she is his mother, the *conteur* describes the shame he suffers in some detail (ll. 193-194, 222). Likewise in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, the emotional reaction of the good peasant who is slapped and rudely insulted by the seneschal is simply not described. When the peasant later slaps and humiliates the seneschal, the antagonist of this fabliau, the shame the seneschal suffers is in contrast described in some detail (ll. 227-229). One could argue, however, that the reason neither the beggar lady in (37) La vieille Truande or the peasant in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet are described experiencing the feeling of shame is that those low on the social ladder simply can not experience shame. Cf. the discussion below, Chapter Four; see also Robreau 161.

coward.[39] Ronald Gosselin in a study of Manosque in the thirteenth century notes that if a woman was insulted and did not take the matter to court, it was assumed that the slight was deserved. If men failed to respond to some insult or injury, it was a cause for surprise.[40] In the Lancelot-Grail cycle as well, taking vengeance is presented in a very positive light as a way to recover honor, and to be angry at being shamed is to want to take vengeance.[41] Hence it is that the characters in the fabliaux who feel the emotion of shame without subsequently taking vengeance are in a sense admitting that they deserve to be shamed, while characters who, acting out of their anger, take vengeance against their detractors are showing that the shame is not merited. It follows that the characters in the fabliaux who are described as feeling the emotion of shame without subsequently taking vengeance are more often the reprehensible dupes while those whose response includes the sentiment of anger and who subsequently take vengeance are usually the protagonists.

Shame and the Presence of Others

In the Lancelot-Grail cycle, characters feel the emotion of shame only upon the revelation of their wrongdoing to others. Never does a solitary individual in the Lancelot-Grail cycle feel shame. Although a hero may be aware that he has done wrong, he experiences none of the emotions associated with shame until his fault is made known to others.[42] The same does not hold true in the fabliaux. While it is the norm in the fabliaux for some element of public disclosure to accompany the experience of shame, it is not always the case. In (102) Le Prestre comporté, for instance, the prior, all alone, faints from fright when he happens upon a silent motionless priest in the abbey's latrine. When the prior recovers from his faint, he reproves himself for his cowardice:

39Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society, ed. J.G. Peristiany, The Nature of Human Society Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) 21.

40Ronald Gosselin, "Honneur et violence à Manosque (1240-1260)," in Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du Moyen-Age. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. Michel Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, Service des Publications, 1987) 51, 57.

41Robreau 147, 166.

42Robreau 167-169.

Lors s'est molt durement blasmés,
Quant li cuers li est revenus:
"Or sui je plus jovenes que nus,"
Dist il, "Puis que pasmer m'estuet
Par un homme qui ne se muet!
Or m'estoit trop li cuers fallis." (ll. 907-912)

Then he harshly reproved himself when he came to: "Now I am more flighty than anyone," he said, "Since I had to faint on account of a man who does not move! Now my heart was too weak."

The priest in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville likewise experiences the feeling of shame without any public disclosure. When he comes to the realization that the butcher has done him the *vilonie* (l. 447) of sleeping with his mistress, he reacts in a fashion that signifies the feeling of shame: "Par molt grant ire s'est asis,/ Dolenz et tristres et pensis" (ll. 465-466: "In great anger the priest sat down, aggrieved, sad and pensive").[43]

Indeed, characters are considered to be in the state of shame even when neither they themselves nor anyone else knows of the shameful event. An excellent example of this is provided by (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux, in which a miller schemes to sleep with a young girl who has come to his mill to grind some wheat. The miller's valet offers the miller a pig in exchange for the opportunity to sleep with her as well. The miller's wife then gets wind of the miller's plan to deflower the girl and, unknown to her husband, has the girl sleep in her bed while she sleeps where the girl was to sleep. The miller then unknowingly has intercourse with his own wife several times that night and the valet then sleeps with her as well; both think they have slept with the girl, and the wife thinks the valet is her husband. As soon as the valet has had intercourse with the miller's wife, the *conteur* describes the miller with the shameful expression "li vuihos" (the cuckold), even though none of the characters yet realize what has happened: "'Dont a ele eü a despois!'/ Chou a dit Jakes li wihos" (ll. 264-265: "'Then she had her fill!' Jake, the cuckold, said this"). Similarly in (4) Auberee the newlywed whose husband kicks her out of the house at night because he suspects her of adultery is said to suffer shame by virtue of this act alone, even though night has fallen, all the doors are closed, and no one knows of the shameful

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[43]See also (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier when the priest, by the terms of the swindling agreement he himself has drawn up, must allow the visiting knight to sleep with his mistress:

Ore a grant duel li Capelains,
Qui ensi voit gaster sa cose,
Et sa bouce ouvrir n'en ose... (ll. 893-895)

The priest has great sorrow, who sees his goods wasted thus, and he does not dare open his mouth...

manner in which her husband has treated her:

> Et dist que ja Deu ne pleüst
> Qu'ele menjast jusqu'el seüst
> Por quoi ele a tel honte eüe. (ll. 313-315)
>
> And she said that may it please God that she not eat until she know why she suffered such shame.

Likewise in (37) La vieille Truande the squire considers himself shamed simply by virtue of the fact that the old beggar woman says she is his mother; no one else (as yet) knows of her shameful claim:

> -"Vois," fait il, "Por le geule Diu,
> Sui bien honis! A ci boin giu,
> Quant ceste laide vielle torce
> Se fait me mere tot a force:
> Pres va que jou ne l'escervele!" (ll. 129-133)
>
> "Truly," he said, "For Chrissakes, I am well shamed! In this good game, when this twisted old woman makes herself my mother by force, I almost lose my mind!"[44]

So too in (56) Frere Denise the friar is denounced by the noble woman for putting to shame the young girl whom he has seduced, even though virtually no one knows of the seduction and the young girl has sworn never to tell anyone.

> La norrice qui vous norri
> Fist molt mauvaise norreture,
> Qui si tres bele creature
> Aveiz a si grant honte mise! (ll. 252-255)
>
> The nurse who raised you did a very bad job, you who have put to shame such a very beautiful creature.

Whether they are treated in dishonorable or disrespectful fashion, cuckolded, or seduced, these characters are considered to be in the state of shame and, with the exception of the miller in (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux who does not even know that he has entered the state of shame, all express the sentiment of shame. An audience is not necessary.

The characters who consider themselves shamed even though no one else knows of their shameful situation are in marked contrast to those characters in the fabliaux who fear *only* the public revelation of their misdeed and who do not feel shame otherwise. For such characters shame may be said to be "on the skin" rather than on the "inside." Shame for them is an external

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[44]See also (46) La Coille noire ll. 20-23, in which the wife claims she has been shamed by being touched by a man with black balls, a fact hitherto known only to her husband. Marriage to a man of low estate appears to be the underlying cause for her outrage and shame.

sanction only.[45] Most of the adulterous couples in the fabliaux, for instance, are willing partners in crime whose only concern is to keep their affair secret; aside from this, they seem to find nothing inherently shameful in what they are doing. The unfaithful wife in (51) Les deus Changeors indeed makes this explicit, telling her lover,

> "Il covient mener par esgart
> Amors, qui les veut maintenir,
> Que l'en nes puist por sos tenir;
> Denn'est pas mes sires jalous?
> Ainz avons entre moi et vous
> Jusques ci nostre amor eüe,
> C'onques par nul ne fu seüe:
> La volez vous fere savoir?
> Cil n'est mie plains de savoir
> Qui tout a esceint s'aville..." (ll. 38-47)

> "Love must be handled cautiously by those who wish to maintain it, so that one can not consider them fools; is my lord jealous about it yet? Rather we have kept our love between you and me until now so that it has never been known by anyone. Do you want to make it known? He is not at all wise who knowingly debases himself..."

Similarly the arrogant peasant-turned-knight in (34) Berengier au lonc Cul who willingly chooses to kiss the buttocks of a mysterious opponent in lieu of engaging him in battle experiences no shame in giving the shameful kiss, for no one is present to witness it. The only emotion he appears to experience during the course of his confrontation with the mysterious knight is fear:

> Et cil qui doute mout forment
> Et qui plains est de coardie,

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[45]Strathern 99-110; Hogbin 272-274, 283-284. Historical evidence from medieval France suggests there was an awareness that shame could be an external sanction only and that for some even the external sanction of shame was insufficient. See Rinaldo Comba, "Apetitus Libidinis Coherceatur: Structures démographiques, délits sexuels et contrôle des moeurs dans le Piémont du bas moyen-âge," Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du moyen âge. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. M. Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Service des publications de l'Univérsité, 1987) 72. Comba, using historical records concerning sexual offenses in Piemont from 1290 up to the mid-fourteenth century, shows that the only cases of adultery which were punished were cases of public notoriety in which the wronged spouse was clearly and publicly offended. Cf. also Michel Zink, La prédication en langue romane, avant 1300, Nouv. bibliothèque du moyen âge vol. 4 (Paris: H. Champion, 1976) 442, who cites the sermon Dilige dominum concerning 7 types of mortal sin. The fifth and sixth sins relate to the loss of shame over sin. The fifth type of sin occurs "quant l'en s'en acoustume de pechié fere et l'en en pert la honte;" the sixth type which follows is when "donc si chiet en ignorance qui desconnoit son pechié."

Dit que il ne iostera mie... (ll. 232-234 D)

And he who is very afraid and who is full of cowardice says that he will not joust at all...

It is only when his wife later discloses that she knows of his cowardly behavior that he experiences the emotion of shame:

Mout en ot grant honte et grant ire:
Onques puis ne l'osa desdire,
Desconfit se sent et maté. (ll. 295-297 D)

He was greatly ashamed and distressed about it: never again did he dare to contradict her; he senses himself undone and beaten.

That these characters commit the shameful deed voluntarily shows that the behavioral norm to which they are failing to adhere has not been internalized. Aware that others would disapprove, though, they do feel shame when their wrongdoing is disclosed to the eyes of others. This does not indicate that shame in the world of the fabliaux was an external sanction; rather, it suggests that shame was an external sanction only for those characters who have failed to internalize its dictates.

The Feeling of Guilt

As discussed above in Chapter Two, the feeling of guilt is indicated by a variety of terms and situations. The verb *se repentir* and the noun *repentir* are used to describe characters' feelings of repentance and remorse after having committed some wrongful act or offended the "Other," and the verb *se peser* in its sense of "to regret" can be used to describe how one's actions weigh upon oneself because of the harm they have brought upon another. Characters who acknowledge how their actions have hurt another, such as the ignorant peasant in (106) Le fol Vilain who loses his wife's *con* or the wife in (17) Les Braies au Cordelier who has *fait anui* to her husband by crying out in alarm when he comes home unexpectedly, may also be considered to be experiencing the feeling of guilt. Characters who beg for forgiveness or mercy from the person whom they have wronged can also be understood as feeling guilty.

The terms that are typically associated with the feeling of guilt are fewer in number and more narrow in range than those associated with feelings of shame. Related sentiments include first and foremost the feeling of sorrow. The adjective *dolenz* appears most frequently. Hence the peasant husband in (13) Le Vilain Mire who apologizes to his wife for beating her states, "Sui je dolenz et repentans" (l. 101: "I am sorrowful and repentant"), and the prior who thinks he has killed the sacristan in (74) Le Sacristain I leaves from having deposited the body with a

sorrowful face: "A ciere mout dolant et morne" (l. 270: "with a very sorrowful and mournful face").[46] The adjective *morne* likewise is often used, as in the previous example.[47] The adjective *dolereuse* appears in (74) Le Sacristain II when the wife Ydoine sees that her husband has murdered the sacristan on her account (l. 353), and the expression *avoir doloir* appears in version III of (74) Le Sacristain again to describe the feelings of the wife (l. 397). In (124) Trubert the duchess is said to *avoir duel* and to *faire duel* when her husband the duke makes reference to her adultery: "Dou duel qu'ele a ses poinz detort.../ Ainz mes dame tel duel ne fit" (ll. 1030, 1032: "She wrung her hands from grief...never was a woman so sorrowful"). The term *pensif* is used twice in (74) Le Sacristain III to describe characters who think they have killed the sacristan (ll. 328, 396).

Typical gestures accompany the sorrow associated with feelings of guilt: crying, sighing, and wringing of hands. The wife Ydoine in version II of (74) Le Sacristain releases a sigh from her heart when she sees her husband commit a murder to which she is also a party: "Quant Ydoine le vit morir,/ Du cuer a gité un soupir" (ll. 349-350: "When Ydoine saw him die, she sighed from her heart"). She then weeps while her husband thinks of ways they can extricate themselves from being accused: "Cele pleure, Guillaumes pense" (l. 369: She cries, Guillaume thinks"). In the example cited above from (124) Trubert, the duke's wife wrings her hands (l. 1030).

The only other sentiment frequently associated with feelings of guilt in the fabliaux is the feeling of fear. When characters can expect serious consequences for their misdeeds, they are described as *angoiseuse*, *paoros*, or *en (grant) freor* or *paor*. Hence the anxious soul of the peasant who has just died in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait is described with the words, "mout fu angoiseuse.../si pooreuse" (ll. 11-12 C: "he was very anguished...so afraid"). The dying wife in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, distraught with guilt over her adulterous liaison with her husband's nephew, tells her confessor that because of it, ..."li miens cors est mout grevez/ Et la moie ame en grant freor" (ll. 164-165: "my body is much grieved, and my soul in great fear").[48] The word *effroi* is used in (124) Trubert to describe the guilt the

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[46]See also (74) Le Sacristain II l. 351, III l. 544; (106) Le fol Vilain l. 335.

[47]See also (74) Le Sacristain III l. 328, 396; (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame l. 91 (in which the adjective *mat* is also used to describe the feelings of the knights when one of their number is killed at a tournament).

[48]See also (124) Trubert ll. 331, 351, 367; (74) Le Sacristain III l. 348, 367.

duchess experiences when her husband makes a pointed reference to her adultery: "Lors fu la dame en tel effroi/ Com s'ele eüst trois homes morz" (ll. 1028-1029: "Then was the lady as fearful as if she had killed three men"). Trembling is often associated with this fear. Hence the adulterous duchess in (124) Trubert trembles (l. 351: "De paor li tramble li cors" ["Her body trembled from fear"]), and her soul trembles as well: "Dedanz le cors li tramble l'ame" (l. 368: "Within her body her soul trembles").[49]

The gestures associated with this fearful guilt are those that occur when characters appeal for mercy, as discussed above in Chapter Two: falling at the feet of the person from whom one can expect chastisement and joining one's hands together in supplication.[50] The gesture of beating one's chest also occurs in a few instances. Most often, as one would expect, beating one's chest occurs in the religious context of the sacrament of penance or during the recitation of the *Confiteor* at Mass, as when the peasants attending a muddled Good Friday service in (94) Le Prestre qui dist la Passion "Bat sa coupe et crie merci" (l. 37: "Beat their chests and cried 'Mercy!'")[51]. The expression "bas sa coup" also occurs in secular contexts.[52] In (7) Boivin de Provins, for instance, the madam of a house of prostitution, feigning guilt over having taken a girl away from her family, tells her supposed uncle, to whom she wishes to sell the girl's virginity, that she has sinned greatly: "Je ai mout fort pechié" (l. 253: "I have sinned greatly") and beats her chest three times ("bat trois foiz sa poitrine" l. 252). As we have just seen, wringing of hands accompanies fearful guilt in (124) Trubert when the duke makes a pointed reference to the duchess's adulterous affair: "Dou duel qu'ele a ses poinz detort... (ll. 1028-1030: "From sorrow she wrung her hands..."). Yedlicka in his study of the vocabulary of repentance and remorse in Old French moral and didactic literature identifies the wringing of one's hands as a gesture typical of the expression of repentance. However, other gestures identified by

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[49]See also (74) Le Sacristain III in which the husband Hugh, fearful of being discovered while disposing of the body of the priest, is described as having a trembling heart: "Mes sachiez que li cuers dou ventre/ De grant paour el cors li tramble!" (ll. 366-367: But know that his heart in his chest trembled in his body on account of his great fear!").

[50]See above, Chapter 2, Section 2, I. Terms Describing Forgiveness Without Paying the (Full) Debt to the "Other:" *Pardoner, Assolir/Assoudre, Merci, Delivre, Cuite.*

[51]See also (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 212.

[52]As discussed above, Chapter 2, Section 2, I. Terms Describing Forgiveness Without Paying the (Full) Debt to the "Other:" *Pardoner, Assolir/Assoudre, Merci, Delivre, Cuite.*

Yedlicka, such as tearing the hair and scratching the face, are absent from the fabliaux.[53]

Several expressions occur repeatedly in the fabliaux in the monologues of those expressing the sentiment of guilt. Together they constitute a typical pattern of lamentation, a pattern which Payen in Le Motif du repentir repeatedly links to the expression of contritionism.[54] Often characters refer to themselves with the adjectives *las* (wretched) and *chaitif* (miserable). The wife in version II of (74) Le Sacristain, on seeing that her husband has killed the sacristan on her account, laments "Lasse, dolente" (l. 351), and the wife in version III laments "Ceste chetive que fera?" (l. 256: "This miserable wretch what will she do?").[55] Sometimes they beseech God for help, exclaiming "Aie!" like the adulterous wife on her deathbed in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, who ends the initial part of her confession with the words "Or m'en repent vers Dieu, aïe!" (l. 173). At other times they simply cry out to God, like the peasant in (102) Le Prestre comporté who, thinking he has killed the priest, cries out "Hé, Dieus" (l. 532).[56] *Hé* is combined with *las* in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, in which the priest, when informed by the squire that the knight wishes to sleep with him, laments his greed with the words, "Hé, las...bien me justiche/ Couvoitise, qui male me maine!" (ll. 1119-1120: "Ah! Wretch! Covetousness, which treats me badly, punishes me well"). Characters sometimes curse the hour they were born,[57] or the moment they embarked on the path that has led to their predicament. Ydoine in version II of (74) Le Sacristain laments "Mar fusse ge de mere nee" (l. 354: "Unfortunately was I born of a mother").[58] In one manuscript she curses the day and hour she met the monk whom her husband has killed: "Et si maldit lo ior et l'ore/ Q'ele onques s'acointa do moine" (ll. 401-402 B: "And she cursed the day and the hour that she ever met the monk"). The wife in version I of

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53Yedlicka 380-384. Some of the gestures which Yedlicka describes, such as lowering the head, are actually more typical of the feeling of shame. As noted above, Yedlicka fails to make a distinction between shame and guilt.

54See for example Jean-Charles Payen, Le motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale (Des origines à 1230) (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967) 216-219, 242-243, 302, 304, 308, 347, 379-380, 402.

55See also (74) Le Sacristain I l. 187; III l. 539; (125) Le Moigne ll. 16-17.

56See also (74) Le Sacristain II l. 453; (124) Trubert l. 352-354.

57According to Payen, this is a Christian topos originating in Job which became popular through Gregory the Great's Moralia.

58See also (124) Trubert l. 369.

(74) Le Sacristain laments that she is still alive:

> "Grans peciés est que je sui vive
> Et que m'arme remaint u cors
> Ke par moi est cis moines mors..." (ll. 188-190)
> It is a misfortune that I am still alive and that my soul remains in my body, for on account of me this monk is dead...

Sometimes characters wish they were elsewhere. While this desire is often expressed by fabliaux characters who find themselves in unpleasant circumstances, it is interesting to note how often it occurs in the context of guilt. Ydoine in (74) Le Sacristain II, guilty of participating in the death of the monk, wishes she were in Babylon ("Quar fusse ge en Babiloine!" (l. 352: "Would that I were in Babylon"). The adulterous duchess in (124) Trubert, in finding out that her husband knows of her adultery, wishes she were outside the castle, in some place from which she could never return:

> "Ha, Deus, car feusse or la fors,"
> Dit la dame, "En tel leu iroie
> Que je ja mes ne revenroie!" (ll. 352-354)
> "Ah, God, would that I were outside!" said the lady, "In such a place I would go, from which I would never return!"

Calling oneself *las* or *cheitif*, crying out to God or appealing to God for help, cursing the hour one was born, and wishing one were elsewhere are all forms of verbal lamentation frequently associated with the experience of guilt in the fabliaux.

Guilt and the Expectation of Punishment

Key to the feelings of guilt experienced by most of the characters in the fabliaux is a fear of punishment or chastisement. The fear, trembling, appeals for mercy and lamentation of characters who have committed a serious misdeed can all be understood as an expression of the fear of punishment. Indeed, characters who have committed no misdeed but are fearful of being blamed for one react to their situation with precisely the same gestures, lamentation, and expressions of fear as those who are guilty. For instance, the wife of the peasant in (74) Le Sacristain I who discovers a corpse in their house and fears that her husband will be wrongly accused of murder laments by calling herself "lasse:" "...Que ferai, lasse?/ Bien sai, je serai demain arse,/ Et vous serés pendus, biaus sire!" (ll. 425-427: "Wretch, what will I do? I well know, I will be burned tomorrow, and you will be hanged, good sir!"). The innocent peasant in version II similarly laments, "Las...or sui ge mort!/ Demain serai penduz a tort" (l. 743-744:

"Wretch...now I am dead! Tomorrow I will be wrongly hanged"). The innocent priest in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force who is threatened with being suspended for failing to take care of his mother -- the woman is actually the mother of another priest -- reacts with fear:

> Or ot mout grant paour le prestre,
> Quant il ot qu'il est soupenduz:
> Tout li sans li est esmeüz. (ll. 126-128)
>
> Now was the priest very afraid, when he heard that he was suspended: all his blood churned.

Hence it would appear that the lamentations and gestures of the guilty are inspired more by the fear of chastisement than expressions of anguish over how their actions have hurt the other.

There are comparatively few instances in the fabliaux in which the expression of the feeling of guilt does not also entail the fear of chastisement. They strike the modern reader as oddly devoid of emotion. The prostitute Mabile in (7) Boivin de Provins appears to experience feelings of guilt when she confesses to her supposed uncle that she committed a grave sin in taking the young girl Ysanne away from her family for the purposes of selling her into prostitution. She strikes her chest three times and acknowledges how she has harmed another and committed a wrongful act but otherwise exhibits no sorrow or lamentation:

> Adonc bat trois foiz sa poitrine:
> "Oncles, je ai mout fort pechié
> Qu'a ses parenz l'ai fortreis gié.
> Por seul son pucelage avoir,
> Eüsse je mout grant avoir.
> Mes vous l'avrez, que je le vueil!" (ll. 252-257)
>
> Then she beat her chest three times: "Uncle, I have greatly sinned, for I stole her from her parents. I would get a lot of money for her virginity but you will have it, for I want it so!"

Mabile is only pretending to feel guilt over the girl's ravishment, however, in order to convince her uncle that she is offering him the chance to deflower a virgin. The peasant husband in (13) Le Vilain Mire who apologizes to his wife for beating her likewise seems to be offering her a sorrow-ridden acknowledgement of wrongdoing, but he too is feigning guilt. He tells her:

> A sa fame cheï aus piez
> Et li pria: "Por Dieu, merci!
> Sachiez, ce me fist anemi,
> Qui me fist fere tel desroi.
> Tenez, je vous plevis ma foi
> Que ja mes ne vous toucherai!
> De tant com batue vos ai
> Sui je dolenz et repentans." (ll. 95-101)

He fell at his wife's feet and beseeched her: "For God's sake, mercy! Know that it was the devil who made me do such harm. Stay, I pledge you my faith that I will never again touch you! As much as I have beaten you, so I am sorrowful and repentant."

In fact he is intending to beat her again the next day so as to insure that she remain faithful to him. Indeed, the passage in which he devises this plan, born out of his fear that his wife, the daughter of a knight, will sleep with the priest while he, a peasant, is working in the fields, reads like a parody of the feelings of guilt:

"Hé, las! Cheitif!" dist le vilein,
Or ne me sai ge conseillier,
Que repentir n'i a mestier!"

Ah, miserable one! Wretch!" said the peasant, "I do not know how to advise myself, for regret (after the fact) is of no avail."

Virtually the only other instances in the fabliaux in which characters express feelings of guilt without the expectation of punishment are when a husband, rightly suspicious of his wife's behavior, suddenly finds himself confronted with apparently incontrovertible proof of her fidelity and apologizes to her for wrongly questioning her virtue. The husband in (17) Les Braies au Cordelier, for instance, apologizes for having distressed his wife and vows never again to suspect her of adultery:

..."Dame, ne vos desplaise,
S'un poi vos ai faite marrie;
Foi que ge doi sainte Marie,
Tel amende vos en ferai
Que ja mais de vos ne serai
En soupeçon de jalousie!" (ll. 342-347)

..."Lady, may it not displease you if I distressed you a little: by the faith I owe St. Mary, I will make you such an amend that where you are concerned, I shall never again have the idea of jealousy!"

The husband in (116) Le Pliçon similarly apologizes for having startled his wife by arriving home unexpectedly in the middle of the night. He explains that he was not trying to catch her with a lover (which, unknown to him, is what he has actually done) and he does his best to comfort her, showing a strong sense of regret for having distressed her:

Li bourgois sa femme conforte,
Qui la coulour ot pale et morte,
Car ne set que fere peüst,
Ne quel confort en li eüst.
"Soer," dist il, "De çou c'ai meffait
Me pardonnés tout le mesfait,
Car je ne vous mescreÿ onques." (ll. 59-65)

> The bourgeois comforts his wife, who had a pale and deathly color, for he does not know what he can do, nor what comfort she would have from him. "Sister," he said, "For that which I have done wrong, forgive me all the fault, for I never doubted you."[59]

It is only to be expected that these husbands fear no chastisement, however, as men are the physical masters of the household and would never expect punishment from their spouses. Indeed, that they experience guilt and apologize to their wives when their wives in fact are intent on tricking or cuckolding them may in fact be an indication that these husbands are failing to dominate their wives as they should and hence deserve to be cuckolded. It is interesting to note in this context that Payen has found that in the *chansons de geste*, when a husband asks his wife for forgiveness, he fully expects to receive it and does not seem particularly sorry.[60]

Besides these husbands who offend and subsequently apologize to their wives, there are virtually no characters in the fabliaux who actually experience what we in twentieth century Western culture would identify as sincere feelings of guilt, guilt that is not prompted by a fear of chastisement and which entails an awareness of how one's actions have harmed the other.[61] The

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[59]See also (69) Les Tresces II ll. 404-406; and (106) Le fol Vilain ll. 339-356.

[60]Payen 390.

[61]In (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame, the lady is said to be afraid ("ot peor" l. 128) because she has delayed so long in arriving at her tryst with the knight. Her fear is likely not an expression of feelings of guilt, however, but rather is born out of a fear of getting caught; certainly her haughty reaction in finding that the knight has fallen asleep while waiting for her suggests that she does not feel guilty about her delay. In (117) La Nonete, the prioress tells her companions, the cellarer and bursar, that they should free their companion from prison because she may kill herself from despair:

> "Par le corps Dieu, pau nos prison
> Quant si longhement on l'i laisse!
> Mierveilles est que ne s'eslaisse
> A li tuer par desespoir." (ll. 94-97)

> "By God's body, little can we have a good opinion of ourselves when we leave her there for so long! It is a marvel that she does not kill herself in a hurry from despair."

The priority given to having a good opinion of themselves in this passage, as well as the fact that the prioress is taking action only because the imprisoned nun has threatened to accuse her of grave misdoings if she does not help her secure her freedom, suggests that guilt is largely absent here as well. In (125) Le Moigne, the monk who has ridden his horse off the road into a marsh when he is sexually aroused by the sight of some beautiful women states that he "se repent" what happened: "De la folie me repent/ Qui m'est hui cest jour avenue" (ll. 76-77: "I repent of the folly which happened to me today"). In that he has been shamed when all the butchers in the market nearby banged their hammers in unison at seeing him fall into the mud, the verb *repentir* should likely be understood more as expressing regret over having been shamed rather than guilt over having sinned.

only exception appears to be the duke in (124) Trubert, who seems to be expressing some guilt when he states that the harm his household has done to the merchant weighs upon him:

> Et si me pose dou forfet
> Que ma mesniee vos ont fet;
> Mes je sui prez de l'amender..." (ll. 991-993)
> "And the wrong which my household has done to you weighs on me; but I am ready to make amends for it..."

Devoid of any emotion, however, his comments are focused more on the need to make amends than expressing an internal sense of anguish. As will be discussed later in Chapter Four, many characters try to make others feel guilty and, as was noted in Chapter Two, the *conteur* in several fabliaux makes explicit mention of the fact that characters do not care about how their actions have harmed another. When punishment is not imminent, however, and with the exception of gullible husbands who believe their adulterous wives, the actual feeling of guilt is oddly absent.

Medieval theologians beginning with Gregory the Great made a distinction between compunction born of the fear of punishment and compunction born out of love. In the twelfth century De vera et falsa poenitentia, repentance born out of a fear of damnation is identified as false and sterile repentance, and is contrasted with repentance arising from regret for having distanced oneself from God.[62] According to Peter Abelard, whose views greatly influenced later theologians, true penance is motivated by love of God and hatred for sin, not the sorrow for sin which comes from fear of chastisement, a sorrow which even the damned in hell experience.[63] Later masters of the twelfth century, building on this, stated that contrition sufficient in itself for the forgiveness of sins is animated by the love of justice or hatred for one's sins; penance attains its perfection when motivated by the love of God.[64] William of Auvergne, writing in the first part of the thirteenth century, was the first to regard the sorrow for sin born out of a fear for punishment as also being the effect of God's grace and to postulate a natural movement from

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[62]"Sed quoniam poenitentia non omnis est bona, dicamus aliqua quae separant veram a falsa, sterilem a fructifera. Sunt enim quos peccasse poenitet propter praesentia supplicia...Huic concordant qui confitentur inviti, non amore boni, sed ut fugiant damnum vel incommodum saeculi...Si quis tali poenitentia securus existiterit, et ad veram de ista non contenderit, deceptus est et miser aeternaliter peribit. Utilis ergo erit poenitentia, si sit spontanea; Dominum quaerens quem amisisse doleat, ad illum anxians praeter quem non est vita." Cited in Paul Anciaux, La Théologie du sacrament de pénitence au XIIe siècle (Louvain: É. Nauwelaerts; Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1949) 28.

[63]Anciaux 156-157

[64]Anciaux 163.

attrition, sorrow born out of fear, to contrition, or sorrow prompted by the love of God. This movement was the result of God's sanctifying grace, received either before or during the sacrament. His views were summed up by later writers as "ex attritio fit contritus."[65] St. Thomas Aquinas echoed the views of William of Auvergne, stating that imperfect contrition, or attrition, ideally develops into or is replaced by perfect contrition through the grace of God or the agency of the confessing priest. The sinner thus moves from sorrow for his or her sins because of the recognition of the punishments which may result, to a sorrow prompted by the love of God.[66]

Given the late date at which the doctrine of contrition and attrition was formulated, one would be surprised to see any evidence of it in the fabliaux. However, there is evident in several fabliaux a movement in a different direction. Characters who are guilty (or who think they are guilty) of a serious offense often begin their lamentation using the vocabulary of religious guilt and then move to an expression of their fear of the punishments which threaten in this world. The peasant in (102) Le Prestre comporté who mistakenly believes he has killed a priest initially cries out to God for help, expressing his repentance in religious terms. It soon becomes apparent, however, that his sole concern is to dispose of the body so as to avoid being put to death himself:

"Hé, Dieus," dist il, "Se il me loist
De cest grant tort fait repentir,
Grans ahans en vorrai soufrir,
Pour tant que jou quites en soie.
Dieus, pour quoi nel reconnissoie
Le priestre ki si est vaillans!
Trop ai trouvés mes ieus faillans
Quant il ne fu reconneüs.
Se chieus afaire est seüs,
Tous li mons me devra huer.
Le deüst on por chou tuer
K'il estoit montés sour me bieste?
Che fu et par giu et par feste,
Sans faille, k'il i fu montés.
Hé, Dieus, par les vostre bontés,
Comment en serai je delivres?
N'encor ne sui je pas si yvres

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[65]Paul F. Palmer, Sacraments and Forgiveness: History and Doctrinal Development of Penance, Extreme Unction and Indulgences, Sources of Christian Theology 2 (Westminster, Maryland: The Neuman Press; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1959) 199-201; B. Poschmann, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, trans. and rev. by F. Courtney (New York, 1964) 165-166.

[66]Palmer 205, 212-214; Poschmann 171-174.

Que jou le laisse ichi gisant,
Car bien sai, aucun paissant
Acuseroient cest meschief." (ll. 518-537)

"Alas, God," he said, "If it is permitted to me to repent of this great wrong done, I will willingly suffer great torment to be quit of it. God, why didn't I recognize him, the priest who is so valiant! I have found my eyes very faulty when he was not recognized. if this affair becomes known, everyone will raise the hue and cry after me. Should one have killed him for this, that he had mounted my beast? It was for a game and for a joke, without a doubt, that he had mounted. Ah, God, by your bounty, how will I be delivered from this? I am not yet so drunk that I would leave him lying here, for I know well that anyone passing by would accuse me of this misfortune."

The wife in (74) Le Sacristain I who has inadvertently been a party to the death of a monk similarly expresses her guilt in religious terms when she first realizes that the monk is dead. It soon becomes obvious, however, both from her statement that she will be more than "honnie" as a result of the murder and from her husband's reassurances that she will not be "blasmée" for the crime, that she is more motivated by the fear of being caught and hanged.

..."Lasse, caitive!
Grant peciés est que je sui vive
Et que m'arme remaint u cors,
Ke par moi est cis moines mors:
Or serai jou plus que hounie!
-"Dame," dist il, "Ne doutés mie,
Ke vous n'en serés ja blasmee!" (ll. 187-193)

..."Miserable one, wretch! It is a great sin that I am alive and that my soul remains in my body when this monk is dead on account of me. Now would I be more than shamed!" -"Lady," he said, "Don't be afraid at all, for you will never be blamed for it!"

The prior in (74) Le Sacristain I also moves from expressions of guilt in religious terms to a fear of punishment at the hands of men:

"E, Dius, j'ai mort le secretain:
Le pecié n'ert ja espani!
Volés vous *corpus Domini*?
Biaus dous conpains, parlés a moi!"
Cil ne li dist ne çou ne quoi.
"Dius, con m'a encombré peciés!
Or sui jou de murdre enteciés,
Ke ferai, las, se c'est seü?
Tout mi conpaignon ont veü
K'ier matin desmentions l'uns l'autre:

Or sui jou ceüs en mal fautre,
Ke mais messe ne canterai.
Mais par l'ordre Diu, si ferai;
Ançois m'en cuit aidier mout bien:
Or i parra se je sai rien!" (ll. 244-258)

"Alas, God, I've killed the sacristan: the sin will never be expiated! Do you want [to receive] the *corpus Domini?* Good sweet companion, speak to me!" But he didn't breathe a word. "God, how sin has encumbered me! Now I am stained with murder. What will I do, wretch, if this is known? All my companions saw that yesterday morning we called each other liars: now I have fallen into a bad mistake, for I will never again sing mass. But by the arrangement of God, I will do so; now I am thinking how to help myself very well: now it will be evident if I know anything!"

The plot of each of these fabliaux necessitates that the guilty person attempt to dispose of the incriminating evidence represented by the body, and hence it is only natural that the characters in question end their monologues with some statement to the effect that they will attempt to avoid punishment by disposing of the body. Nevertheless, these monologues are revealing in that they demonstrate the importance of the imminent possibility of punishment in expressions of guilt.

That feelings of guilt appear to be prompted more by the expectation of punishment than an awareness of how one's actions have harmed the "Other" explains why intention appears to play so small a part in determining whether or not characters in the fabliaux feel guilty. The numerous characters in the "corpse-many-time-buried" fabliaux who mistakenly think they have killed the priest or monk are all innocent according to Abelard's doctrine of intention, but their lamentations are identical to those who are in fact guilty. It is interesting to note in this context that Germanic law did not use intention to assess matters of guilt. As the *Leges Henrici* put it, "Legis enim est qui inscienter peccat, scienter emendat." The *Livre de Jostice et de Pletz* went so far as to specify that only criminal outcomes, and not criminal thoughts, merited punishment: "Nus hom ne doit soffrir painne de sa pensée." Not until the late twelfth century, and then only at first in the canonical courts, was criminal intent taken into account in assessing the penalty due for a crime.[67] This would appear to have been too late to be reflected in the fabliaux.

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[67]R. Howard Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) 32-39.

Guilt and Character

While feelings of shame, especially the more passive feelings, are more typically experienced by the duped characters or antagonists in the fabliaux, feelings of guilt when accompanied by the fear or expectation of punishment are found among all ranks, from the duped and the antagonists to the dupers and the protagonists. The guilty peasant fearful for the fate of his soul in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait is clearly the protagonist, as too is the guilty wife in (70) Le Sohait des Vez who expresses sincere regret for having accidentally struck her husband in her sleep. The adulterous wife in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse who confesses her sins in an anxious deathbed confession is initially duped and, as a dominating wife, is undeserving of the audience's sympathy, but she later deceives her husband by telling a boldfaced lie, showing that he is the one ultimately responsible for allowing her to dominate and cuckold him and that ultimately he is the dupe. The attitude one should assume towards the wife remains equivocal.[68] The duped husbands who feel guilt over having doubted their adulterous wives are generally not reprehensible, but they are at least unsympathetic. Unlike the feeling of shame, then, the feeling of guilt does not seem to be a mark of particularly reprehensible character. Indeed, the fact that numerous characters in the fabliaux actually feign the feeling of guilt in order to convince others of the sincerity of their actions provides further evidence that actually experiencing the emotion of guilt was not an indication of reprehensible or inferior character. The prostitute Mabile in (7) Boivin de Provins, for example, tells a man whom she mistakes for an ignorant peasant that she feels guilty about having kidnapped a young girl for the purposes of selling her into prostitution.

> Adonc bat trois foiz sa poitrine;
> "Oncles, je ai molt fort pechié,
> Qu'a ses parents la fortreis gié. (ll. 252-254)
> Then she struck her chest three times; "Uncle, I have sinned
> greatly, for I stole her away from her family."

Her confession to the man is not prompted by any real remorse but by a calculated attempt to deceive the man into thinking that she is offering him the chance to deflower a virgin.[69]

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[68]Cf. Raymond Eichmann, "The Anti-Feminism of the Fabliaux," French Literature Series 6 (1979): 26-34.

[69]See also (13) Le Vilain Mire, in which the cruel husband pretends to feel sorry each evening for having beaten his wife, though in actuality he is intending to beat her again the next day so as to ensure she remain faithful to him; (17) Les Braies au Cordelier, in which the wife begs her husband to forgive her for crying out in alarm when he comes home unexpectedly as a way of hiding the fact

Conclusion, Chapter Three

The way in which the feelings of guilt are portrayed in the fabliaux thus differs markedly from the experience of the feelings of shame. Most often feelings of guilt are accompanied by feelings of sorrow and fear. The gestures that typically accompany expressions of the feeling of guilt are those that typify expressions of fear: falling at the feet of the person whom one has offended, joining the hands in supplication, beating the chest, and trembling. The lament of those who express feelings of guilt is typical also of those who expect to be punished or chastised: both are marked by calling oneself a wretch (*las* or *chaitif*), calling on God for help, regretting the day that one was born or the moment that one embarked on the path that has led to the present difficulty, and wishing that one were somewhere else. Aside from husbands who beg forgiveness from their wives for wrongly suspecting them of adultery, virtually no characters in the fabliaux express feelings of guilt without also fearing chastisement or punishment. Hence in the fabliaux feeling guilty is strongly linked with the expectation of punishment. This is not the case for shame. Shame would therefore seem to be more internalized than guilt. While some characters feel shame only when others discover their fault or failing, others experience it even in the absence of others.

The feeling of shame, like guilt, is associated with feelings of sorrow, but there the similarity ends. Feelings of shame are generally associated with different sentiments and gestures: feelings of astonishment and confusion, feelings of being crushed or defeated, and, most notably, feelings of anger, especially among the protagonists. The gestures and physical manifestations of the sentiment are those of humiliation and defeat: lowering one's head, withdrawing, and blushing or blanching. Sweating also occurs. While characters occasionally feign the feeling of guilt in order to convince others of the sincerity of their intentions, no characters ever feign the feeling of shame.

Does any of this indicate that shame was more important than guilt? That few characters in the fabliaux experience the feeling of guilt in the absence of the threat of punishment while characters do feel shame even when other people are absent suggests that shame was more

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that she was alarmed because she is with her lover; and (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, in which the lady feigns guilt over ordering the members of her household to beat her husband in order to convince everyone that she had no idea that her husband, who had been posing as her lover in an attempt to catch her in the act of adultery, really was her husband.

internalized than guilt, which may indicate a moral system more centered on shame than guilt.[70] The fact that no characters feign feelings of shame suggests that it was an experience more feared than feelings of guilt.

Certainly the feeling of shame plays a more important role than feelings of guilt in fabliaux plots. When characters experience the feeling of shame, it is almost always as a result of the duping which constitutes the core of the plot of that particular fabliau. The plot of (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, for instance, revolves around the duping of the proud peasant-turned-knight, and it is as a result of this duping that he feels shame. The same holds true for the shame the hypocritical friars suffer in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre and the shame the young squire experiences in (37) La vieille Truande. In (52) Le Vilain au Buffet, (2) Constant du Hamel, (39) Le Vilian qui conquist Paradis par Plait, (76) La Plantez, and (120) Le Sentier battu, the plot revolves around the antagonist(s)' shaming of the protagonist, followed by the more vicious shaming of the antagonist by the protagonist in return, all accompanied by feelings of shame. Indeed, the feelings of shame initially experienced by the protagonists can be seen as part of the preparation for the comic climax of the fabliaux, as described by Thomas Cooke in his book The Old French and Chaucerian Fabliaux: A Study of their Comic Climax. When the protagonist experiences feelings of shame and especially anger, the audience is being prepared for the comic climax of the fabliaux in which the antagonist will be shamed in turn, and in a more vicious way.

In contrast, feelings of guilt rarely play a key role in fabliaux plots. The guilt of the adulterous wife in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse is the only possible exception, her feelings of guilt over her adulterous affairs prompting her to make the deathbed confession which constitutes the central action in the fabliau. Even so, the crux of the plot lies in the fact that she makes her confession to her husband, who disguises himself as a monk, yet is still able later to convince her husband that she is innocent of adultery. The guilt the other dying characters in the fabliaux experience, such as the peasant in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait and the priest in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre, is even more peripheral to the plot and only in the case of (127) Le Vescie a Prestre helps move the plot forward. Likewise the guilt expressed by characters who have committed some misdeed, such as the wife in (70) Le Sohait des Vez who has struck her husband or the characters in the "corpse many times killed" fabliaux who rightly or wrongly believe they have killed someone, again helps move the action forward in that it motivates the characters concerned to beg for mercy or attempt to hide their misdeeds, but does

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[70]See Williams 219-220.

not play a role in helping prepare the audience for the comic climax. Not central to the plot, feelings of guilt play a much less important role in the world of the fabliaux than feelings of shame.

Chapter 4:

SHAME AND GUILT AS SANCTIONS AND DETERRENTS

As noted above in Chapter 1, shame and guilt can be emotions, states, sanctions or deterrents. In this chapter I examine their role in the fabliaux as sanctions and deterrents. I summarize what kinds of sanctions are brought to bear against characters who are shamed or guilty. I examine the types of offenses or failings for which these sanctions are brought to bear, exploring their role as agents of social control. I then explore the question of how effective each is as a deterrent, focusing on the situations in which they are ineffective as deterrents. These situations can reveal when more compelling motives or conflicting goals may have been in effect. In so doing, I am again examining the question of the relative importance of each sanction, but more importantly I am also exploring the role each played as a symbol available as a guide for action and for interpreting the behavior of others.

The Types of Sanctions

Chapter Two details the types of sanctions shame and guilt entail in the fabliaux. As we saw, shaming assumes a wide variety of forms. Most often it entails at least in part the act of revealing a character's offense to others. When the offense is sexual in nature (adultery or, for the clergy, lechery) the revelation is often a literal one as well, entailing the malefactor being seen naked or chased naked through the streets. Characters who continually fail to amend their ways are the subject of gossip, but gossip occurs relatively infrequently in the fabliaux compared to face-to-face verbal assaults: accusations, denunciations or scolding, insults, mockery and especially laughter. Adulterous wives are occasionally shorn of their hair and lecherous priests castrated. References are made to men having their heads shaved, a process described as shameful. It was a treatment for the insane, but it is never actually done in the fabliaux. Being muddied or soiled with feces is presented as shameful, and some characters are shamed by being thrown into the mud or, in the case of the monk in (74) Le Sacristain II, pelted with mud and pots by the people of the town. Occasionally characters are shamed by being slapped or struck, but much more frequently beatings are administered as part of the shaming process. In several instances characters who are *honi* are mutilated and even killed.

Many of the sanctions which guilt entails in the fabliaux are also outlined in Chapter

Two. Characters who take (or threaten to take) a case to court for some wrong they have suffered expect to receive some sort of monetary payment, a *droit* or *amende*.[1] This was typical of the justice system in medieval France, in which victims typically received one portion of the fine levied and the jurisdiction the other (and usually larger) portion.[2] Characters who (rightly or wrongly) think themselves guilty of murder fear being sentenced to death, either by hanging or burning.[3] Again, these were the typical punishments meted out in the courts of high justice for murder, burning usually being reserved exclusively for women or heretics.[4] A cook who disobeys the orders of a count in (83) La Dame escoillee is maimed, his eye put out and an ear and hand cut off, and he is finally banished, a severe punishment normally reserved for notorious criminals and recidivist thieves, those unable to pay their fines, and serious offenders in cases in which the death penalty seemed too severe or there was insufficient proof or no apparent motive.[5]

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[1](74) Le Sacristain II l. 808; (77) Connebert l. 306; (81) Le Prestre teint ll. 169, 210; (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier ll. 33, 56.

[2]Nicole Gonthier, Délinquance, justice et société dans le lyonnais médiéval de la fin du XIIe siècle au début du XVIe siècle (Paris: AP éditions arguments, 1993) 228-240; Roger Grand, "Justice criminelle procédure et peines dans les villes aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles," Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes 102 (1941): 96; Rodrigue Lavoie, "Justice, criminalité et peine de mort en France au Moyen Age, un essai de typologie et de régionalisation," Le sentiment de la mort au Moyen Age. Acte du VIe Colloque de l'Institut médiéval de Montréal (Montreal, 1975) 52-53; Mireille Vincent-Cassy, "Prison et châtiments a la fin du moyen âge", Les marginaux et les exclus dans l'histoire, ed. B. Vincent, Cahier Jussieu 5 (1979) 263; cf. Mary Mansfield, The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth Century France (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) 278.

[3]See also (102) Le Prestre comporté, in which the tavernkeeper expresses a fear that they will be delivered over to great torment if the body of the priest is not removed from the premises: "Livrés serons a grant escil,/ Se de chi tost ne le tolés" (ll. 699-700: "We will be delivered over to great torment, if you do not quickly take it away from here").

[4]Esther Cohen, "Symbols of Culpability and the Universal Language of Justice: The Ritual of Public Executions in Late Medieval Europe." History of European Ideas 11 (1989): 407-416; Gonthier 247-248, 251-252; Grand 99-102; Lavoie, "Justice, criminalité et peine de mort" 44-46, 52. The prior in (74) Le Sacristain I, thinking that he has killed the sacristan, states that he fears he will never again sing a mass; this is likely an indirect way of saying that he fears he will be killed, as clergy handed over to the secular authorities for punishment were usually defrocked before being put to death. See for example the description in Cohen, pp. 407-408.

[5]Jacques Chiffoleau, Les justices du pape: Délinquance et criminalité dans la région d'Avignon au quatorzième siècle, Histoire ancienne et médiévale 14 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1984) 232-233; Gonthier 241; Grand 51-108; Lavoie, "Justice, criminalité et peine de mort" 39-40, 52-53.

A traitor to the duke in (124) Trubert is dragged through the town and hanged, the punishment prescribed for traitors in such customals as the *Coutumes de Beauvaisis*[6]

Outside the context of formal judgements, punishments are less varied. Husbands scold and beat their adulterous or disobedient wives; one wife scolds her wayward husband.[7] Other characters beat or kill those who have wronged them.[8] Men who fear injury from the husbands they have cuckolded describe the injury they expect to receive (a beating or castration) with terms from the vocabulary of shame, not guilt, but occasionally they use terms such as *anui* or *dame*, which can pertain to both shame and guilt.[9] In (56) Frere Denise the outraged wife threatens to lock the lecherous cleric in a large chest. Her husband then releases the friar after he stretches himself out on the ground, his arms outstretched in a cross in an appeal for mercy, and agrees to pay 400 pounds as dowry for the young girl whom he has led astray. What the lady intended to do by locking the friar in a chest is unclear. According to the editors of the NRCF, she may either be planning to drown him or to take him to his superiors.[10] Drowning was a punishment typically reserved for women, or, occasionally, traitors, while imprisonment was used either to keep a person impounded pending or during trial or, more rarely, as a means of inducing criminals to confess, so most likely the latter interpretation suggested by the NRCF is correct.[11]

As we saw above in Chapter Two, misfortunes are often attributed to past sins that one

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[6]Gonthier 247; Lavoie, "Justice, criminalité et peine de mort" 44. Cf. also (124)Trubert l. 1628, in which the duke's nephew tells his attackers that his uncle would hang them if he knew of their actions; plainly their affront is also treason.

[7]See for example (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens ll. 20-50; (42) Le Fevre de Creil, in which the husband vows to give his wife her *guerredon* (l. 167) for cuckolding him; (77) Connebert ll. 61-62; (83) La Dame escoillee ll. 11, 364-369; and (124) Trubert, in which, when her husband refers to the man who has cuckolded him, the duchess is described as being as frightened as if she had killed three men (ll. 1028-1029).

[8]See for example (1) Estormi ll. 584-587; (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville l. 404; (124) Trubert ll. 799-800.

[9]See for example (77) Connebert ll. 6, 14; (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier l. 143.

[10]NRCF vol. 6, 316.

[11]Only in the fourteenth century did imprisonment begin to be used as a form of chastisement, but generally only for those too poor to pay the fines. See Chiffoleau 225-232; Gonthier 247, 252-252; Lavoie, "Justice, criminalité et peine de mort" 39-40, 49-50, 52; Grand 93, 106; and especially Vincent-Cassy 262-274.

has committed and can therefore be regarded as divinely-imposed sanctions. In (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, for instance, the priest finds himself forced to allow the knight to sleep with his mistress by the terms of the deceptive agreement which he himself imposed in order to swindle the knight. He laments that his sins have tricked him: ("...mes péciés/...m'a engingné et nuit" (ll. 843-844: "...my sins...have tricked and harmed me") and he considers himself punished by covetousness ("bien me justiche/ Couvoitise, qui mal me maine!" (ll. 1119-1120: "Covetousness, which treats me badly, punishes me well!").

In a religious context, the sanction of guilt typically entails damnation. Characters on their deathbeds fear eternal damnation, and other characters are seized by demons at their death or go to hell.[12] Damnation entails physical punishments, as is made explicit in (105) Les Sohais, in which the angels describe the torments which await usurers:

> "Dehait ait or sifais mestiers
> Dont li ame est si tormentee
> Et justicie et tempestee!" (ll. 33-35)
> "Cursed be such a craft, on account of which the soul is so tormented and punished and tortured!"

In (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame a knight pretends to be a soul in torment, a punishment suffered for a single misdeed he did during his lifetime: "je sui en molt grant poine" (l. 206: "...I am in very great torment"). In only one fabliau does guilt in a religious context entail a less physical sanction. In (2) Constant du Hamel, the loyal wife fears that she will cast away the love of God if she agrees to a liaison with the priest. She rebuffs his advances with the words:

> ..."Sires, j'ai oï dire,
> Se vostre amie devenoie,
> L'amor de Dieu en gerpiroie..." (ll. 22-24)
> ..."Sir, I have heard it said that if I became your lover, I would throw away the love of God..."

Several characters do *penance* or *penitance* for their sins, but it is not specified what this was.[13]

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[12](3) St. Pierre et le Jongleur ll. 40-44; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 164-165; (43) La Male Honte II l. 24; (52) Le Vilain au Buffet ll. 72-74; (55) Le Pet au Vilian; (64) Les Putain et les Lechëors l. 82; (102) Le Prestre comporté ll. 1101-1106; (127) Le Vescie a Prestre ll. 95-96. See also (93) Guillaume au Faucon l. 424. Being shriven *in extremis* in (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait is said to make God forgive one's sins (ll. 150-154).

[13](33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse l. 213; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 580. In (55) Le Pet au Vilain, the devil stomps on the gut of a dying peasant "por penitance" (l. 47).

In (111) Le Testament de L'Asne, a priest offers to do "penitance,/ Ou soit d'avoir ou soit de cors" (ll. 138-139: "penance, either in fines or through bodily punishment") for an offense. In (16) La Housse partie I, reference is made to wearing a hair shirt as a way of expiating sins (ll. 262-264). In (2) Constant du Hamel, a married couple is turned out of church when it is claimed that they are too closely related

Ecclesiastical sanctions are brought to bear against the clergy in several fabliaux. The bishop in (111) Le Testament de l'Asne threatens to imprison the priest who has desecrated sacred ground by burying his ass in a cemetery. The abbess in (117) La Nonete imprisons the novice nun in order to make her repent for having taken a lover. One of her charges accuses her of being unreasonable for sentencing her to death for something as innocuous as falling under the sway of love. The abbess responds that she hopes imprisonment will make the nun repent:

> -"Et pour quoi, dame, depagnau,
> A li lasse desiervie mort,
> Se boinne amours la point et mort?"
> -"Espoir que elle s'en repent." (ll. 184-187)
> -"And why, lady, by God, has the wretch deserved death, [just because] good love pricks and bites her? -"I hope that she repents."

Imprisonment was indeed more commonly meted out as a penalty in the ecclesiastical courts because it provided the wrongdoer with the time to reflect and repent, but death was not an uncommon consequence of being imprisoned[14] The priest who fails to provide adequately for his mother is threatened with suspension in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force. In (68) L'Evesque qui beneï le Con, a bishop attempts to force a priest to give up his concubine by ordering him to refrain first from drinking wine, then from eating goose, and finally from sleeping on a mattress.

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What is interesting about the kinds of sanctions brought to bear against offenders in the fabliaux is, firstly, how closely the fabliaux reflect what we know of historical reality. The person who was the object of shaming processions in medieval France was mocked, laughed at, ridiculed, and pelted with mud or feces, like characters who are shamed in the fabliaux. The punishments administered by the secular and ecclesiastical courts in the fabliaux likewise closely mirror the kinds of punishments meted out in reality. What is also interesting is that the

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[14]Gonthier 244.

sanctions of shame so often entailed physical punishments: being beaten, mutilated or even killed. To the modern reader such actions would be comprehensible from the perspective of guilt, as punishments administered for a wrongdoing, but not as part of the shaming process. From a shame culture perspective, however, these actions are part of the process of exacting revenge and restoring the honor of the original victim.

Shame and Guilt as Agents of Social Control

In what kinds of situations were the sanctions of shame or guilt brought to bear? As was evidenced in Chapter Two, the sanctions of shame in the fabliaux are most frequently brought to bear for sexual offenses, most especially against husbands who are cuckolded. Cuckolds are laughed at, mocked, and ridiculed.[15] Priests and other clergy who cuckold men are also frequently subjected to the sanctions of shame: they are beaten, thrown on dung heaps, beaten into the mud, castrated, killed, and/or forced to flee through the streets naked.[16] Men other than clergy who are caught by the husbands they have cuckolded are likewise humiliated; they are

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[15](2) Constant du Hamel ll. 696-700, 729-731, 759-767; (17) Les Braies au Cordelier l. 322; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 285-286; (115) Les Braies le Priestre ll. 88-103; (124) Trubert l. 396.

[16]Killed are the three lecherous priests in (1) Estormi, the sacristan or monk in (74) Le Sacristain, the priest in (102) Le Prestre qu'on porte, and the three priests in (85) Les quatres Prestres (though in the latter fabliau no words from the vocabulary of shame are used). The cleric in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk initially refrains from seeking the solace of the lady because he fears for his life (l. 98). Later she tells him that he will be cut to pieces if her friends find out about his outrageous proposal (l. 516). The priest in (124) Trubert, accused of rape, is beaten to death. The priests in (14) Aloul and (81) Le Prestre teint are threatened with castration, and the priest in (21) Les Perdris thinks he is being threatened with castration. The priest in (27) Le Prestre crucefié actually is castrated, but as a consequence of the way in which he hides himself from the husband. He also flees naked down the street, is beaten with a club, and beaten into a mud patch. The priest in (75) Connebert is castrated and mocked. The priest in (87) Le Prestre et le Mouton is also castrated, though no terms from the vocabulary of shame are used. The husband in (19) Le Borgoise d'Orliens is beaten by his own household and thrown onto a dung heap when they are misled into thinking that he is a cleric who is propositioning the mistress of the house. The husband in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, also taken for the cleric who is propositioning the mistress of the house, suffers a similar fate. The peasant in (49) Le Vilain de Bailluel who has been tricked by his wife into thinking he is dead insults the priest and tells him he would beat him up if he were not dead (l. 94-99). The *honte* the priest suffers at the hands of the cuckolded husband in (79) Le povre Clerc is not specified (ll. 240-241). Cf. (119) Le Clerc qui fu repus derriere l'Escrin, in which the husband's failure to fight the cleric and valet who have cuckolded him is interpreted by the *conteur* as evidence that he is a suffering cuckold who deserves what he gets.

beaten, castrated, forced to flee naked through the streets chased by dogs, or cuckolded in turn.[17] Unmarried women who engage in illicit liaisons suffer the shame of having their lasciviousness revealed to others[18], being laughed at or mocked (especially when seen engaging in intercourse),[19] or scolded by their guardians.[20] One woman, the mistress of a priest, is insulted when another calls her children bastards.[21] This contrasts sharply with married women who engage in illicit liaisons; when they are unable to deceive their husbands, they not only suffer such verbal forms of humiliation as being insulted and called whores, they also typically receive brutal treatment at the hands of their husbands, being beaten and shorn of their tresses. This physical castigation is always described with terms from the vocabulary of shame.[22] Married women who attempt to dominate their husbands are likewise mocked and beaten.[23] Adulterous

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[17]See for example the priest, forester and provost in (2) Constant du Hamel. The knight in (82) La Dame qui se venja de Chevalier expects to be killed (ll. 116-117)

[18]As for example the abbess in (117) La Nonete; and the noble woman in (120) Le Sentier battu. The maiden in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons suffers shame when her *con* reveals to the knight that she has slept with more than 100 men (ll. 183-190 M)

[19](20) Celle qui se fist foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari l. 101; (114) La Gageure ll. 86-94; (120) Le Sentier battu ll. 80-83. Cf. (117) La Nonete, in which the nuns laugh when the abbess, surprised in bed with a lover, lectures them sternly while wearing a man's breeches on her head (ll. 154-155).

[20](30) Celle qui fu foutue et desfoutue ll. 73-79, 105-106.

[21](18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville l. 366-367, 409-412.

[22]See (63) Celui qui bota la Pierre II ll.106-108; (124) Trubert l. 198 ff; 385-386. The treatment received by the wife in (4) Auberee is somewhat unusual. When her husband first suspects her of adultery, he simply turns her out of the house at night, after all the gates are closed. This is key to the plot, allowing her the opportunity to engage in an adulterous liaison. The husband in (17)Les Braies au Cordelier admits to the friar that he was about to kill his wife when he discovered what he thought was proof that she was sleeping with a cleric (l. 329). The husband in (54) La Dame qui fist Tors entor le Moustier is about to cut off his wife's hair when she offers him proof that she was not engaging in an adulterous affair (ll. 136-137). The wife in (107) Les deus Vilians fears being turned out of the house, and her husband tells her she would be shamed if her family and just one neighbor knew of her adultery; presumably the neighbor would tell others (ll. 143-146, 160-165). (I interpret the events in this fabliau as suggestive of adultery and not incontinence as the editors of the NRCF state. The behavior of husband and wife both suggest they think that adultery is her offense.)

[23](5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse l. 386, and especially the *conteur's* closing remarks, advising men to beat their wives if they attempt to dominate them (ll. 404-413); (14)Aloul ll. 140-144; (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 233-247; (83) La Dame escoillee.

husbands do not fare as badly: one adulterous husband is the subject of gossip[24] and another finds himself cuckolded in turn.[25] Priests who keep mistresses are for the most part not subjected to any sanctions; one, however, is subjected to gossip,[26] and one who is caught with a prostitute is chased naked through the streets, beaten all the way.[27] Young men who are sexually ignorant are laughed at and mocked.[28] Young women who are sexually ignorant are laughed at and taken advantage of.[29] Men who are unable to perform enough times to satisfy their partners or wives are mocked, laughed at or scolded by the women.[30] In other fabliaux, men scorn women who ask for sex too often.[31] In one fabliau, a man expels intestinal gas in the lap of his wife when he finds her too demanding;[32] in another, he defecates in her lap.[33]

Anthropologists have found that ritual humor in a given culture typically entails breaking

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24(8) La Bourse pleine de Sens ll. 28-31.

25(110) Le Meunier d'Arleux.

26(41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force l. 16.

27(91) Le Prestre et Alison ll. 416-437.

28(10) Jouglet ll. 284-289. The ignorant husbands in (53) Le sot Chevalier, (66) La Sorisete des Etopes, and (106) Le fol Vilain are not shamed because of their ignorance, but certainly the misadventures caused by their ignorance bring them shame and, in two of the fabliau, lead to their cuckolding.

29(30) Cele qui fu foutue et desfoutue I l. 86. See also (65) La Pucele qui voloit voler, in which the cleric mocks the woman for her outrageous desire to fly when she confronts him with the fact that he has made her pregnant (ll. 93-101). Cf. (58) L'Esquiriel, in which the young girl is ravished but is not otherwise mocked or shamed.

30(29) Les Vallet aus douze Fames ll. 57-71; (31) Les quatre sohais Saint Martin ll. 132.1-134; (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux ll. 293-306; (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk l. 508. The duke in (124) Trubert mistakenly thinks he is being mocked (ll. 698-715). Poor performance is the basis for the first insult in (120) Le Sentier battu (ll. 48-51).

31(33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse ll. 153-158; (70) Le Sohait des Vez ll. 65-66; (73) Le Maignien qui foti la Dame ll. 90-98.

32(67) Porcelet.

33(108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit pour Morele sa Provende avoir. In this fabliaux the wife's offense is not only to be too demanding, but also to act contrary to her husband's wishes and to attempt to dominate him. See ll. 325-330.

those taboos which haunt people the most.[34] While adultery and concubinage received relatively little attention in the secular courts and municipal statutes until the mid-fourteenth century,[35] sexual sins were a major focus of confessional manuals, *summa confessorum*, and canonical statutes from the thirteenth century through to the end of the middle ages and beyond. Adultery and fornication number high among the cases brought before ecclesiastical courts.[36] According to both Roman and canonical law, a man could legally murder both his wife and her lover if he caught them *in flagrante delicto.*[37] Clerical celibacy was long a concern and was repeatedly mandated. The Cluniac movement in the tenth century first gave impetus to the enforcement of clerical celibacy. In the eleventh century clerics were ordered to turn out any women living in their houses, including wives. In 1059 Nicholas II issued decrees mandating clerical celibacy and forbade Christians from attending masses said by clergy who kept women in their homes. The Second Lateran Council of 1139 decreed that Holy Orders automatically invalidated matrimony.[38] Violations of sexual norms were indeed taboos of great concern.

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[34]Mahadev L. Apte, Humour and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) 171 ff.

[35]The number of cases of adultery brought to communal courts and the courts of the chatelaines was low before the mid-fourteenth century but increased sharply thereafter, peaking during the early fifteenth century. Concubinage (living together without being married) was generally not prohibited in communal statutes until the middle of the fourteenth century nor punished in the courts until the fifteenth; even adultery received little attention in communal statutes until after the mid-fourteenth century. See Rinaldo Comba, "Apetitus Libidinis Coherceatur: Structures démographiques, délits sexuels et contrôle des moeurs dans le Piémont du bas moyen-âge," Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du moyen âge. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. M. Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Service des publications de l'Univérsité, 1987) 65-101; Rodrigue Lavoie, "Justice, morale et sexualité à Manosque (1240-1430)," Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du moyen âge. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. Michel Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, Service des Publications, 1987) 17.

[36]Pierre J. Payer, "Sex and Confession in the Thirteenth Century," Sex in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays, ed. Joyce E. Salisbury, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 1360; Garland Medieval Casebooks 3 (New York: Garland, 1991) 126-142; Hervé Martin, "Confession et contrôle social à la fin du moyen âge," Pratiques de la confession. Des pères du désert à Vatican II. Quinze études d'histoire, Groupe de la Bussière (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1983) 123-127. Cf. Jean Delumeau, Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th - 18th Centuries, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) 215-220.

[37]R. Howard Bloch, Medieval French Literature and Law (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), ch. 1.

[38]Jo Ann McNamara, "Chaste Marriage and Clerical Celibacy," Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus

Several other offenses besides sexual ones are met with the sanctions of shame. As we saw above in Chapter Two, the peasant class was frequently characterized in very negative terms in the fabliaux and terms from the *vilain* family are frequently used to indicate the experience of shame. Thus we find that peasants who commit the offense of seeking to rise above their station are frequently shamed. The peasant in (39) Le Vilian qui conquist Paradis par Plait is insulted and refused admittance when he seeks to enter heaven because, as St. Peter tells him, "Nos n'avons cure de vilain,/ Et vilains n'a rien en cest estre" (ll. 28-29: "We do not care for peasants, and peasants have nothing to do with this place"). The unwashed peasant in (52) Le Vilian au Buffet who enters his lord's hall for a feast is similarly insulted and slapped by the seneschal, for no reason other than that he is an unwashed peasant attempting to attend a noble feast. The butcher in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville who requests lodging at the home of a priest is refused because he is a layman and "vilein" (l. 72). The young squire in (37) La vieille Truande who is filled with noble pretensions is shamed when he is forced to admit before a company of nobles that his mother is a beggar woman.[39] Many of the noble women who are forced to marry wealthy peasants are said to be shamed as a result; their families, like that of the bride in (34) Berengier au lonc Cul, are said to go to "honte" (l. 25) as a result.[40] Many have suggested that the harsh attitude assumed towards peasants in the fabliaux may be rooted in the appearance, as early as the twelfth century, of a wealthier class of peasants in northeastern France who were indeed socially mobile. The antipathy assumed towards such peasants in the fabliaux can be viewed as a

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Books, 1982) 32. See also Margaret Deanesly, A History of the Medieval Church 590 - 1500 (1925; London: Methuen and Company, 1972) 98.

[39]Interestingly, the hideous old beggar woman does not appear to be insulted when the squire repeatedly hurls insults at her, but she does in a sense exact revenge by forcing him into a shameful admission and acquiring his coat. The peasant in (52) Le Vilain au Buffet is likewise insulted but is not described as feeling ashamed. He too exacts vengeance. See Chapter Three, n.38.

[40]See also (10) Jouglet, in which the newlywed wife curses her family for having given her in marriage to "cest vilain" (l. 135) and "ceste beste" (l. 14); and (2)Constant du Hamel ll. 319-329, 346-347, in which the forester insults the wealthy peasant Constant by referring to his diet of cheese, eggs, and peas, staples of the peasant diet. For other examples of how peasants who seek to rise above their station are shamed, see (106) Le fol Vilain, in which the peasant in one episode drinks with four bourgeois and has to leave his surcoat as surety for the bill; and (92)Le Vilain Asnier in which, on a symbolic level, the peasant has attempted to rise above his station by venturing on the spice merchant's street, where his true nature is revealed before a crowd when he faints from the unaccustomed odors and is revived by sniffing manure, which as we have seen was strongly linked both to shame and to the peasant class.

sort of backlash against these newcomers.[41]

Besides sexual offenses, the offense for which characters in the fabliaux are most frequently shamed is stupidity. Many characters are mocked because of their idiocy. The wife in (10) Jouglet laughs at her husband when she realizes the extent of his sexual ignorance (ll. 284-285), and the young man in (30) Celle qui fu foutue et desfoutue I laughs at the naive young girl he easily seduces with an outrageous lie (ll. 86-87). The pimps in (7) Boivin de Provins mock and make faces at a man they mistake for a simple-minded peasant (ll. 204-211).[42] Many men in the fabliaux are shamed when they are treated as if they have gone insane. The second husband in (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel I is rendered speechless when his wife, having convinced the neighbors that he has lost his mind, has him bound hand and foot (ll. 176-180). The tavernkeeper in (9) Les trois Aveugles de Compiegne is similarly "honteus" (l. 325) when his fellow parishioners, led to believe that he has gone insane, physically restrain him while the priest reads the gospels over his head.

Fools of course were commonly mocked and ridiculed in the Middle Ages in ceremonies of public shaming. Punishments meted out in the courts sometimes mandated that offenders be garbed like fools, a punishment considered very degrading.[43] The fabliau (74) Le Sacristain I recounts how a monk who has apparently gone insane is mocked by the crowds as he rides through the streets:

Tout le gabent et tout le huent,

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[41]See especially Mary Jane Schenck, "The Fabliau Ethos. Recent Views on Its Origins," Reinardus 1 (1988): 121-129; Charles Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1986), ch. 2.

[42]See also (106) Le fol Vilain, in which the foolish peasant repeatedly humiliates himself; and (53) Le sot Chevalier, in which it is stated that the wealthy knight would have attained great honor had he not been so stupid (ll. 25-27).

[43]Edith A. Wright, "Medieval Attitudes Towards Mental Illness,"Bulletin of the History of Medicine 7 (1939) 353 ff.; Barbara Swain, Fools and Folly During the Renaissance (New York: Columbia Press, 1932) 57-58; Enid Welsford, The Fool: His Social and Literary History (London, 1935) 124. Madmen were often beaten and driven outside a town by the inhabitants. See for example George Rosen, Madness in Society: Chapters in the Historical Sociology of Mental Illness (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968) 140-141; Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (New York: Vintage Books, 1973); Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine, Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860 (1963; Hartsdale, New York: Carlisle Publishing, Inc., 1982); Penelope Doob, Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 40-41. Literary sources describe the fool having mud thrown at him. See Swain 61; Wright 354.

Maint pot et maint torçon li ruent.
A l'abé conta uns vilains:
"Sire, ci vient li secretains,
Cui on va huant comme fol... (ll. 463-467)

Everyone mocks him and calls after him, they hurl many pots and clumps of straw at him. A peasant told the abbot about it: "Sir, the sacristan, who people are mocking like a fool, is coming here..."

Numerous characters are also mocked and laughed at when they are tricked. As we saw above in Chapter Two, trickery is frequently linked to shame: terms in the *lait* family are often employed in contexts in which characters are tricked,[44] and the word *conchier* could indicate both "to mock" and "to trick."[45] In the fabliaux, when characters are told about how someone has been tricked, the tricked person is often laughed at, as for example in (127) Le Vescie a Prestre when the town elders all laugh at how the dying priest has tricked the greedy friars (l. 311).[46] Occasionally those who are tricked in the fabliaux are also mocked, like the two scoundrels in (45) Le Prestre et les deus Ribaus who are mocked by the priest who has succeeded in stealing his horse back from them (ll. 267-274).

According to Mary Jane Schenck, the frequency with which characters are duped or tricked in the fabliaux is one of the defining features of the genre.[47] What modern critics have failed to observe, however, is the extent to which being tricked was inherently shameful. The fabliaux which Schenck classifies as based on the theme of the "duper duped" are in fact tales about honor and shame. The first person tricked is shamed by the tricking; that person then restores his or her honor by tricking, and thereby shaming in turn, the trickster. In several fabliaux in which men are cuckolded, this formula is made explicit. It is stated that the husband must take vengeance for being deceived or else remain a cuckold; in other words, he will remain

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[44]See (48) L'Enfant qui fut remis au Soleil ll. 141-145 A; (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons ll. 189-190 M; (108) La Dame qui Aveine demandoit pour Morele sa Provende avoir ll. 323-324.

[45]See (10) Jouglet ll. 417-420; (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel II l. 180; (91) Le Prestre et Alison ll. 132-133.

[46]See also (7) Boivin de Provins l. 376; (52) Le Vilain au Buffet ll. 223-231; (120) Le Sentier battu ll. 80-83.

[47]Schenck, The Fabliaux: Tales of Wit and Deception, Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages 24 (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1987). Cf. Marie-Thérèse Lorçin, Façons de sentir et de penser: Les fabliaux français (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1979) 109-113.

shamed and his honor will not be restored unless he shame the cuckold by castrating him. In (77) Connebert, for instance, the blacksmith tells his relatives that if they do not take vengeance against the priest who has cuckolded them, they will remain cuckolds.

> Mais cil n'est pas cortois ne frans
> Qui set qu'il est cous sofranz:
> Puis qu'il lo set et il lo sofre,
> L'an lo devroit ardoir en sofre... (ll. 73-76)[48]
>
> But he is not noble nor of good race who knows he is a suffering cuckold: because he knows it and endures it, one should burn him in sulfur..

So too in (14) Aloul the husband Aloul, when told that the priest who has cuckolded him has escaped, laments, "Et je remaindrai ci si cous?/ N'en serai vengiez par nului?" (ll. 746-747: "And I will remain here a cuckold? Will I not be avenged by anyone?"). To fail to avenge a wrong done is to acquiesce to the affront. Indeed, in (11) Les trois Dames qui troverent l'Anel, the *conteur* speaks as if the cuckolded husband in the tale has merited his own cuckolding because he is not the sort who would take vengeance:

> Li vilains reproche du chat
> Qu'il set bien cui barbes il leche.
> Cestui a servi de la meche!
> Mes, s'il eüst cuer de preudomme,
> Il s'en venjast a la parsomme. (ll. 196-200)
>
> The peasant resembled a cat, for he well knew whose whiskers he licked. He had a bad trick played on him! But, if he had had the heart of a noble man, he would have thoroughly avenged himself.[49]

Critics have puzzled over several seemingly "immoral" fabliaux, tales in which a character is tricked for no apparent reason. From our perspective, there is no preparation for the "comic climax" and no justification for the trick. The victims in these fabliaux fall into two categories, however, that make the trickery just and indeed humorous from a medieval point of view. Some consent to their deception by failing to take revenge, like the duke in (124) Trubert who fails to take action when his wife reveals her infidelity. The duke deserves to be tricked, again and again, because he is a typical cuckold who cannot restore his honor by taking

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[48]Manuscript G, an older fragment, adds a phrase disparaging the cuckold "puis qu'il consent c'on le wihote" (l. 82 G: "Because he consents that one cuckold him").

[49]The proverb "The cat knows whose whiskers it licks" was used to refer to cuckolded husbands who allowed their wives to dominate them. See NRCF, vol. 2, 407. See also (119) Le Clerc qui fu repus derriere l'Escrin l. 131-143, in which the *conteur* implies that the cuckold has again merited his fate as he does not take action against the two interlopers in his house.

vengeance in turn. Others (and the duke in (124) Trubert also shares this trait) are simply stupid, and their stupidity alone makes them shameworthy and deserving of being tricked. As Brusegan notes in a study of fabliaux characters, having the trait of stupidity justifies being tricked.[50] Hence the foolish peasant Brifaut in the fabliau of the same name [(61)] deserves to be deceived and treated with contempt, and the peasant Gombert in (35) Gombert et les deus Clers, the archetypical stupid peasant with a beautiful wife and daughter, merits being cuckolded and tricked simply because he is stupid enough to have the two clerics lodging with him make their bed beside his own:

> Li vileins, qui bien cuidoit fere,
> Et n'i entendoit el que bien,
> Fist leur lit fere les le sien... (ll. 38-40)
>
> The peasant, who thought he was doing a good deed, and saw nothing in his act but good, made them make their bed beside his own...

Schenck in her article on "The Fabliau Ethos" says that intelligence and wit were the celebrated value of the new socially mobile classes of Picardy. It is for this reason, she argues, that we see reflected in the fabliaux a celebration of the values of this class, "a genuine enjoyment of cleverness and scorn for stupidity."[51] It may be more accurate to view the "celebration of wit" in the fabliaux not so much as a trait particular to a specific class or region, but rather a trait particular to humorous literature in medieval France. As noted above, trickery was often a cause for laughter and shame within the fabliaux, and when characters were tricked they were often subjected to other shaming sanctions such as being mocked or ridiculed. To be tricked was a way to shame another and in my view should be viewed as part of the shame culture ethos rather than an expression of a peasant or bourgeois mentality.

Characters who display cowardly behavior are also subjected to the sanctions of shame. The cowherd Berengier in (14) Aloul is mocked by his fellow cowherds for being afraid of the combative priest Aloul (ll. 846-851). The lovers in (82) La Dame qui se venja du Chevalier and

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[50]Rosanna Brusegan, "Le personnage comme paradigme de traits dans les fabliaux," Cahier d'études médiévales 2-3 (1984): 163-165. See also Paul Bancourt, "Vol puni, vol impuni dans les fabliaux. Contribution à l'étude des rapports de la littérature et de la société au XIIIe siècle," La justice au Moyen-Age (Sanction ou impunité?). Colloque du CUERMA à Aix-en-Provence, mars '85, Senefiance 16 (Univ. de Provence: Publications du CUERMA; Marseille: Éds. Jeanne Lafitte, 1986) 30-31; and Schenck, The Fabliaux 54. Cf. Per Nykrog, Les fabliaux: Étude d'histoire littéraire et de stylistique médiévale(Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1957) 173.

[51]Schenck, "The Fabliau Ethos"121-129. See also ch. 6 of the same author's book, The Fabliaux.

(51) Les deus Changeors are mocked by their mistresses for being afraid of their husbands; the woman in the latter fabliau forces her lover to place his face in her anal cleft. The thieves in (6) Barat et Haimet are ashamed of being frightened of a ghost which they later discover is their companion Travers, who used the other-worldly disguise to steal a ham from them:

> "Certes," fait il, "par malvés cuer
> Avons gité no bacon puer,
> Et Travers l'a par son barnaige!
> Bien en doit faire son carnaige;
> Ne quide mais que il le perde.
> Bien nos porroit tenir por merde,
> S'ainsi li laissomes ravoir. (ll. 451-457)
>
> "Certainly," he said, "through cowardice have we thrown our ham away, and Travers has it through his courage! Well can he feast on it; he does not think he will ever lose it. He can well consider us shit, if we let him have it thus.

The prior in (102) Le Prestre comporté similarly castigates himself for the "cuers fallis" (l. 912: "weak heart") he has shown in fainting at the sight of a silent figure in the abbey's latrine. The *jongleur* in (3) Saint Pierre et le Jongleur readily acts to avoid shame by doubling his bet without a second thought when St. Peter accuses him of being a coward for wagering too little (l. 164). The cleric in (119) Le Clerc qui fu repus derriere l'Escrin goes so far as to reveal his presence to the husband he is cuckolding simply because he thinks the husband is accusing him of cowardice. The cowardly husband in (34) Bérengier au lonc Cul is humiliated by being forced to kiss the buttocks of a strange knight. He is later humiliated again when, upon his return home, his wife maintains her lover in the house and tells him to complain, if he will, to the knight whose buttocks he has just kissed.

Disloyalty also frequently merits the sanctions of shame in the fabliaux. Characters who are disloyal to their lord or family frequently find themselves humiliated or at least threatened with shame. The squire in (93) Guillaume au Faucon who commits an act of disloyalty against his lord by requesting his wife for her love is promised *honte* by the outraged wife:

> "Rendu avez males merites
> A mon seignor de son servise,
> Quant vos sa feme avez requise.
> Amez le vos de tel amor?" (ll. 415-418)
>
> "You have given a poor reward to my lord for his kindness, when you have requested his wife. Do you love him with such a love?"

In (39) Le Vilain qui conquist Paradis par Plait, St. Peter is insulted by a peasant who reminds him of how he betrayed his lord Jesus:

"Petit i conquestas d'onor
Quant renoias Nostre Segnor!
Mout fu petite vostre fois,
Quel renoiastes par trois fois
Que n'estiiés de sa compagne. ... (ll. 35-39)
Ne devés pas les cles avoir.
Alés fors o les desloiaus!
Mais je sui prodom et loiaus,
S'i doi bien estre par droit conte!"
Sains Pieres ot estrange honte;
Tornés s'en est taisans et mas. (ll. 42-47)

You gained little honor there, when you denied your lord! Your faith was very weak, when you denied three times that you were of his company. ... You should not have the keys. Go outside with the disloyal ones! But I am a loyal and good man, so I ought rightly to be here!" St. Peter was greatly shamed; he turned away silent and humiliated.

The relatives of the cuckolded husband in (77) Connebert are insulted by him when they refuse to help him take revenge against the priest who has cuckolded him, as loyal family members should (ll. 66-83). The mother in (41) Le Prestre qui ot Mere a Force starts to shame her son before the bishop and his court by publicly accusing him of disloyalty for devoting himself more to supporting his mistress than to caring for her (ll. 39-55). The elderly father in (16) La Housse partie II fears lest his son be shamed in the eyes of the neighbors for turning him out of the house without so much as a coat to protect him from the cold (l. 80).

Shame and honor are opposite sides of the same coin; that which is cause for pride in a society, when lost, is cause for shame.[52] Hence in the fabliaux the absence of the positive values of bravery and loyalty give rise to shame. Historical records show the same pattern. According to court records in Manosque, the insults awarded the largest amounts in trials for slander against men concerned being traitorous or disloyal.[53]

Guilt as an agent of social control in the fabliaux is, like shame, used most often in cases of sexual misconduct. In most cases the sanction of guilt is called into play in cases of

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[52]A. L. Epstein, The Experience of Shame in Melanesia: An Essay in the Anthropology of Affect, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Occasional Paper 40 (London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1984) 17-18, 40, 49.

[53]Ronald Gosselin, "Honneur et violence à Manosque (1240-1260)," Vie privée et ordre public à la fin du Moyen-Age. Études sur Manosque, la Provence et le Piémont (1250-1450), ed. Michel Hébert (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, Service des Publications, 1987) 54-55.

adulterous women. The wife on her deathbed in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse fears for the fate of her soul and is assigned penance for her adulterous behavior, and the wife in (2) Constant du Hamel refuses to sleep with the priest because she would thereby lose the love of God (ll. 22-24).[54] Most often women fear (and indeed encounter) the more immediate sanction of their husband's wrath, sometimes in the form of a scolding but more usually in the form of a severe beating. As noted above, however, such punishment is usually referred to by terms from the vocabulary of shame; other than terms describing mercy and appeals for mercy, few terms describing beatings administered for illicit affairs are drawn from the vocabulary of guilt.[55] The appeals for mercy from one's husband which appear so frequently in the fabliaux virtually all occur in the context of adultery. Women who disobey their husbands, like the newlywed wife in (83) La Dame escoillee whom her husband says will never be *pardoné* without her *chastiement* (ll. 364-365) , encounter similar punishments, but again, with the exception of appeals for mercy, these punishments are more typically described with terms from the vocabulary of shame.

Other sexual offenses are also met by the sanctions of guilt. The adulterous husband in (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens is scolded by his wife and urged to think about his soul by a stranger. The friar who seduces a young girl in (56) Frere Denise is locked in a box, presumably to be taken before the bishop, and subsequently pays an amendment to the girl in order to purchase a dowry. The priest in (14) Aloul faces castration for cuckolding a man. He begs for

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[54]See also (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, in which the wayward wife does penance for her sin and "Ama Deu sor tote rien" (l. 581: "Loved God more than anything"); and (121)Les trois Chanoinesses de Couloigne, in which one of the nuns wishes that some offense, obliterated in the manuscript, would be an alm as much as a sin and would not prompt God's anger:

> Je souhaide que ...
> Fust aumosne aussi com pechiés,
> Et c'on en aquerist pardon
> De touz mesfais, et guerredon
> Que ja Dieus ne s'en courouçast. (ll. 171 - 175)

> I wish that ...were an alm as much as a sin, and that one could acquire from it pardon and recompense for all sins, so that God would never be angry about it.

The editors of the NRCF suggest that the missing sin or offense may be "cras ditiés." However, in no other fabliaux is speaking crudely or telling crude jokes referred to as a sin or as something which would offend God. This fabliaux is rather late in date, likely written between 1319 and 1329.

[55]The few examples include: (42) Le Fevre de Creil, in which the husband vows to give his wife her *guerredon* (l. 167) for cuckolding him; (77) Connebert, in which the cuckolded husband is urged, "Chastoiez vo fame, la fole" (l. 61); and (124) Trubert, in which, when her husband refers to the man who has cuckolded him, the duchess is described as being as frightened as if she had killed three men (ll. 1028-1030).

mercy using the vocabulary of guilt (ll. 941-943). Also castrated for cuckolding is the priest in (88) Le Prestre et le Leu; the *conteur* terms it his "loier" for the cuckolding (l. 20). The husband whose wife was propositioned by a monk in (74) Le Sacristain II is described as having his *droit* from the monk (l. 808) when he obtains a large payment from him; the outraged husband in (1) Estormi kills the three priests who proposition his wife and thus they "compere[nt] le forfet" (l. 586). The cuckolded husband in (102) Le Prestre comporté is said to be "descombrés du grant mehaing" (l. 1109: "disencumbered from a great wrong") when he drowns the priest who "envers li mesprist" (l. 1111: "wronged him") by cuckolding him. Also punished for sexual misconduct are the clergy. The wayward nun in (117) La Nonete is imprisoned and the bishop in (68) L'Evesque qui beneï le Con forbids many amenities to a priest who keeps a concubine. A violation of the code of courtly love is met with the sanction of guilt in (78) Le Chevalier qui recovra l'Amor de sa Dame, in which the knight acknowledges that he has *mesfait* (l. 177) in falling asleep while waiting to meet his lady. She cuts off the relationship as punishment, and he subsequently goes to great lengths so that she may forgive (l. 209: *pardoner*) his *mesfait* (l. 210).

Criminal actions are also common reasons for the sanction of guilt in the fabliaux. Murder figures prominently. The characters in the corpse-many-times-buried fabliaux [(60) Le Chapelain, (102) Le Prestre comporté, (74) Le Sacristain] often express guilt over their role in what appears to be a murder and show an awareness of the fact that they are likely to be punished by hanging or burning. The envious woman in (109) Une seule Fame qui a son Cors servoit cent Chevaliers de tous Poins who incites a knight to slay her rival is aware of her guilt and fully expects to be put to death. The husband in (1) Estormi who murders three priests is anxious lest his neighbors find out and he is put to death (ll. 324-325). The wife in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk fears the guilt she may incur if she kills the cleric by withholding her love, making her a "homicide" (l. 342: "killer").

In a few instances characters who strike or injure others face the sanctions of guilt. The wife who strikes the go-between in (81) Le Prestre teint is asked to make a payment (*fere le droit*) to settle matters with the woman (l. 210). The man in (89) Le Preudome qui rescolt son Compere de noier who has lost an eye in the course of being saved from drowning takes his rescuer to court seeks *droit* (l. 33) for the loss of his eye and the *domage* (l. 32) he thereby suffered. The castrated priest in (77) Connebert similarly seeks *droiture* (l. 307) in court for his injury.

In a handful of fabliaux theft is sanctioned by guilt. The peasant Constant in (2) Constant du Hamel is accused of stealing his lord's wheat and cutting down trees from the lord's wood. He

is threatened with death and the forfeit of his cattle, and sets matters right with his accusers by paying what amounted to a bribe in order to be quit of the charges and win his accusers' support. The old seamstress Auberée in (4) Auberee wishes that the person who stole the coat she was mending be excommunicated (ll. 594-596).

Treason was a serious criminal offense in the Middle Ages. In the one case of treason in the fabliaux, described in (124) Trubert, the supposed perpetrator is punished, or "son loier renduz" (l. 1639: "his recompense rendered") when he is dragged through the town and hanged (ll. 1636-1640), the usual punishment for traitors.[56]

Women who injure their husbands face the sanctions of guilt in two fabliaux. The wife in (70) Le Sohait des Vez expects to be punished by her husband when she strikes him in her sleep. She tells him, "je m'an rant vers vos mesfaite" (l. 178: "I give myself over to you, guilty"), and begs for his mercy. The wife in (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk similarly begs her husband for forgiveness after she has (supposedly by accident) ordered the household to beat him (ll. 564-567). The offenses of these women should perhaps be classified not as criminal offenses, however, but cases of sexual impropriety in which the wife has set herself over the husband.

Breaking an agreement, breaking rules, and failing to complete a specifically assigned task give rise to the sanctions of guilt in a few fabliaux. In (110) Le Meunier d'Arleux, breaking an agreement leads to a court case. The complainant claims that the miller has possession of a pig "a tort et a pechiet" (l. 312: "wrongfully and sinfully") because the terms of the agreement by which the complainant gave the pig to the miller were not met. The pig is handed over to the complainant and the other youth in the area who slaughter it and enjoy a feast.[57] The priest in (111) Le Testament de l'Asne is castigated by his bishop for having buried an ass in sacred ground, contrary to Catholic practice, and must pay an amend in the form of a large bribe to the bishop. The wife in (93) Guillaume au Faucon tells Guillaume that he will be damned to hell if he commits suicide (ll. 423-424), again a violation of Catholic norms. The fabliau (64) Les Putains et les Lechëors describes, in tongue-in-cheek fashion, how knights are damned because they have failed to carry out God's command to look after *jongleurs* and *lecheors*. Failure to complete a specifically assigned task gives rise to guilt in (106) Le fol Vilain, in which the

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[56]See above n. 6.

[57]Guilt occurs in the context of a broken agreement also in (28) Le Pescheor de Pont seur Saine, in which the husband tells his wife that it would be a sin (*pechie* l. 164) if he did not give her half of his money upon separating from her, as he had promised on their wedding day. No sanction is specified, however.

foolish peasant seems to be expressing guilt when he falls at his wife's feet and informs her that he has lost her *con*, which she has specially entrusted to his care. He fears punishment in the form of her hatred (ll. 353-356).

Yet another category of offenses for which the sanctions of guilt are applied are mistaken accusations or punishments wrongly administered. Characters who mistakenly accuse or punish another for some wrongdoing typically express guilt over their error and voluntarily make amends for the mistake. We noted above the cuckolded husbands who, convinced by some clever stratagem that their wives are in fact faithful, subsequently apologize to their wives for having wrongly accused them of adultery. In some cases they make up for this wrongdoing by vowing never again to suspect their wife of wrongdoing. Another example of this type of wrongdoing is provided by the king in (43) La Male Honte who has repeatedly ordered a man beaten because he has misunderstood the man's words. When the king finally realizes his error, he does not actually apologize to the man but he does return to him the *mal* which the man's deceased friend had bequeathed to the king, thereby making up for the wrong done. Similarly the duke in (124) Trubert vows to make amends to the horse-merchant whom his men have mistakenly beaten by returning his horses to him and allowing him to stay with the duke for a month or longer while he recovers from his injuries. We see here a parallel to the numerous situations in which characters express guilt when they have accidentally hurt or killed someone and cry out for mercy; intention does not matter, what matters is that the wrongdoing be amended (ll. 990-998).

Interestingly, guilt rarely appears in the fabliaux as the direct result of any of the seven deadly sins. The deadly sin of greed is a cause for guilt only for the priest in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier, who laments that he exacted an exorbitant fee from a knight for lodging him for the night, something described by his mistress with the words "A tort et au pechiet" (l. 1211: "Wrongfully and sinfully"). When constrained by the very terms of the agreement he made with the knight to force his mistress to sleep with the knight, he states that his covetousness is now punishing him: "Hé, las," dist il, "Bien me justiche/ Couvoitise, qui male me maine!" (ll. 1119-1120: "Alas, wretch," he said, "Covetousness has punished me well and treated me badly!").

The deadly sin of envy results in the experience of guilt only in (109) Une seule Fame qui a son Cors servoit cent Chevaliers de tous Poins, in which a woman jealous of her rival incites a knight to murder the woman. She explains that she committed the crime ""Pour soupeçon de jalousie,/ Par haÿne traicte d'envie" (ll. 169-170: "Out of distrust born of jealous, out of hatred drawn from envy"). She exhibits a full awareness of her culpability and expects to be punished

(ll. 165-173), clear indications of the experience of guilt. No other vices appear to play a significant role in giving rise to the experience of guilt in the fabliaux.[58] This is especially significant in view of the fact that, according to Lorçin's study of the fabliaux, many of the vices, most especially covetousness, lewdness, pride, envy, anger and sloth, do play a significant role in the fabliaux. They simply are not the occasions for which the sanctions of guilt are called into play.[59]

The sanctions of guilt are thus applied in the fabliaux in four basic situations: cases of sexual impropriety; criminal actions such as murder and theft; failure to keep an agreement or breaking rules; and wrongly accusing or punishing another. Guilt arises in most of these situations because it must, given the definition of guilt. Guilt by definition arises from a transgression or offense. Hence criminal actions, failures to keep an agreement, and breaking rules are naturally met with the sanctions of guilt. Instances in which one character wrongly accuses or punishes another are likewise by definition situations in which we would expect to find guilt because they involve a wrong done to the "Other" and an offense against justice, once again fundamental to the very definition of guilt. Other offenses which could give rise to the sanctions of guilt, such as the seven deadly sins, are met with the sanctions of guilt but rarely.

The situations which lead to the application of the sanctions of guilt are thus more narrow in range compared to those to which the sanctions of shame are applied. Shame arises in several different situations: cases of sexual impropriety, instances in which characters seek to rise above their station, cases of stupidity, being deceived, or acting like a fool, and cases of cowardly or disloyal behavior. One might argue that instances in which characters seek to rise above their station are in fact situations in which shame must arise, given its definition, but the same can not be said for the others. With the exception of cases of sexual impropriety, the sanctions of guilt are applied (or threatened) only in those instances in which guilt must arise given its definition.

The Effectiveness of Shame and Guilt as Deterrents

As we saw above in Chapter One, shame and guilt can serve as deterrents to prevent unacceptable behavior. Interestingly, shame is generally an effective deterrent in the fabliaux

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[58]The title characters in the fabliau (71) Le Couvoiteus et l'Envieus are the names of vices, but no terms or situations indicating the experience of guilt appear in this fabliau.

[59]Lorçin 101 ff.

while guilt is not. Shame prevents characters from engaging in unacceptable behavior in most instances. For example, when the provost in (2) Constant du Hamel propositions Constant's wife, she refuses him because, she says, she would never bring such shame on herself:

> "Ge voldroie mielz estre a nestre
> Que g'ëusse fait tel ostraige,
> Quar vos avez el cors la rage,
> Qui me loez a moi honir." (ll. 61-64)
>
> "I would rather never have been born than commit such an outrage,
> for you are mad in the flesh who advise me to shame myself."

She then says to the forester who propositions her: "Ge ne vos ferai ja servise:/ N'i avrai honte ne domaige!" (ll. 115-116: "I will never do you service: I will not suffer the shame nor the harm!"). Similarly the wife in (81) Le Prestre teint refuses the priest who propositions her out of concern for the shame it would bring her husband:

> La bone dame dist ja n'iert
> Qu'ele face a son mari tort,
> -S'el en devoit prendre la mort-,
> Ne vilanie ne hontage... (ll. 45-48)
>
> The good lady said that it would never be [the case that] she would
> do wrong, nor villainy, nor shame to her husband, even if she were
> to die for it...

The husband in (69) Les Tresces I, motivated by a desire to avoid the shame of being a cuckold who allows his wife to dominate him, states that he would be shamed "en terre" if he showed mercy to his wife: "Se ja mais ai de vos merci,/ Dont soie je honiz en terre! (ll. 155-156: "If I ever have mercy on you, then I am shamed throughout the land!"). He proceeds to administer a savage beating.[60]

In (119) Le Clerc qui fu repus derriere l'Escrin the threat of shame proves to be an effective deterrent even when a more weighty consideration would seem to dictate following the

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[60]See also (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, in which the wife is motivated by gossip and the dishonor into which her husband has fallen to say something to him about his illicit affair (ll. 22-24, 28-29, 42); (25) La Damoisele qui sonjoit, in which the deflowered girl tells her attacker that she had to put up some resistance so that she would not be "pire que ribaude" (l. 63: "worse than a *ribaude*"); (66) La Sorisete des Estopes, in which the husband searches vigorously for the lost *con* in part because, if it is known that he has lost it, "Faite en sera mout grant risee" (l.136: "There will be much laughter"); and (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers I, in which the two clerics decide to embark on a career as bakers in order to avoid the shame of begging for their bread, since "Honte avroient de lor pain querre,/ Tant por lor ordre et tant por el" (ll. 14-15: "They would be ashamed to beg for their bread, as much as for [the shame it would bring upon] their order as on themselves"). In the same fabliau, the miller decides to lodge the two clerics for the night after he has stolen their horse and wheat because he thinks that if he refused, he would be worse than a dog (ll. 151-153).

shameful course of action. A cleric, caught in the house of his beloved when her husband arrives home, finds himself hidden behind a screen. In an attempt to conceal from her husband the cleric as well as another paramour hidden in the house, the wife bitterly scolds her husband as soon as he comes in. Annoyed by her abusive words, he exclaims, "Honnis soit qui s'esmaiera,/ Car chieus la trestout paiera" (ll. 109-110: "May he be shamed who will be frightened, for he will thoroughly pay the price"). Mistakenly believing that the husband has detected his presence, the cleric thinks the words are directed towards himself. Rather than suffer the shame of being a coward, a threat only vaguely defined by the somewhat generic oath "honis soit," the cleric immediately comes out of hiding and reveals his presence to the husband, an act which, if the husband were the vengeful sort so often found in the fabliaux, might have entailed all sorts of dire consequences for the cleric.

We saw above in Chapter Three that many fabliaux characters, especially couples involved in illicit relationships, often fear shame as an external sanction only. They fear getting caught and subsequently being shamed, but have no inner sense of shame that prevents them from doing what would be regarded by others as shameful actions. Shame for such characters is "on the skin;" externally, at least, such characters are acting in accordance with the dictates of a shame culture. There are some instances, however, in which shame proves to be an ineffective deterrent even when others know of the shameful actions. Such situations reveal a great deal about the role of shame in medieval French culture.

In some situations, and somewhat ironically, shame proves to be an ineffective deterrent because of the strong fear of shame. In two fabliaux women allow themselves to be ravished because if they cried out for help, their rescuers would think that the deed had already been done. In (4) Auberee, for instance, the wife's suitor successfully gains her compliance by telling her that if she refuses him and cries out for help, all will assume that she has already lain with him:

-"Par foi," dist il, "Riens ne vos monte!
Ci ne voi ge fors que vos honte,
Quant la grant gent et la menue
Vos verront les moi tote nue.
Il est ja pres de mie nuit:
N'i avra un seul qui ne cuit
Que j'aie fet a grant plenté
De vostre cors ma volenté.
Mieus vient asez que soit emblee
A ceus defors nostre asemblee,
Que nus fors que nos trois le sache." (ll. 381-391)

"By my faith," he said, "This would be worth nothing to you! I see nothing in [your crying out] except your own shame when all the

people, important and lesser, see you beside me all naked. It is already close to midnight: there will not be a single one who will not think that I have already abundantly done my will with your body. It is much better that our being together be hidden from those outside so that no one but us three know.

In (14) Aloul the old servant woman Hersent allows herself to be ravished by the lecherous priest rather than cry out and alert the household. The *conteur*'s remarks make it clear that the fear of shame is so great that Hersent feels she has no choice but to submit:

Or est Hersent merveille souple.
Ne set que fere: s'ele crie,
Toute i vendra ja la mesnie,
Si savroient tout cest afere;
Dont li vient il mieus assez tere
Qu'ele criast ne feïst ton.
Hersent, ou ele vueille ou non,
Sueffre tout ce que li a fait,
Sanz noise, sanz cri et sanc brait:
Fere l'estuet, ne puet autre estre. (ll. 362-371)

Now is Hersent very defeated. She does not know what to do: if she cries out, all the household will come there right away; thus they will know all the affair; on account of which it is better for her to keep quiet than cry out, nor make a sound. Hersent, whether she wants to or not, endures all which he did, without a sound, without crying out, without braying: she must do it, she cannot do otherwise.

In (124) Trubert a similar situation prevails. When the duchess inadvertently reveals to her husband that she has slept with Trubert, the duke, instead of punishing her and alerting others to what has happened, urges her to keep silent about the affair :

"Or en lesson le plet ester:
Se la gent la hors le savoient,
Tuit et toutes s'en gaberoient." (ll. 394-396)

"Now let the matter drop; if the people outside knew about it, they would all joke about it."

Hence the fear of shame prevents the duke from punishing his wife and thereby restoring his honor, as the shame culture ethos would dictate. In other fabliaux as well we see characters choosing one shameful course of action in order to avoid another. In (81) Le Prestre teint, for instance, the outraged wife tells the woman acting as the go-between for the priest that she would strike her if it were not considered shameful:

"Se l'en nel tenist a hontage
Je vos donasse de mon poing,

Ou de ma paume ou d'un baston!" (ll. 157-159)
"If it was not considered shameful, I would give you something with my fist or my hand or a stick."

The go-between then impugns the wife's virtue, and the wife then does strike her. The need to avenge what the go-between says thus outweighs the wife's desire to avoid the shame of treating someone badly. Similarly in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier the knight announces his intention to sleep with the priest, something enormously shameful termed "cose despite" (l. 1058) by the squire, in order to take revenge on the priest for refusing to extend his hospitality to the knight free of charge, as a priest should. Doing something shameful, like doing other wrongful things, is justified if it is in the name of revenge.[61]

In other fabliaux, the conflict between two courses of action, each dictated by the shame culture ethos, is less balanced; characters basically use the dictates of the shame culture ethos to justify pursuing their own interests. In (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse, the wife claims that she took the shameful course of having numerous affairs rather than having to endure shame at the hands of her husband by being deemed a whore for asking for sex as frequently as she wanted it:

Et li mari si sont vilain
Et de grant felonie plain,
Si ne nous oson descouvrir
Vers aus, ne noz besoins gehir,
Quar por putains il nous tendroient,
Se noz besoins par nous savoient:
Si ne puet estre en nule guise
Que n'aions d'autrui le servise. (ll. 153-160)
And husbands are so villainous and so full of great felony that if we dare to reveal ourselves to them, or our needs confess to them, they would deem us whores if they knew our needs through us: and so it can only be the case that we have our service from another.

In (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville, the priest commits the villainous deed of refusing the butcher lodging out of charity. The priest gives as his excuse the fact that he would be blamed for lodging a peasant:

"Ja ne gerrez en mon manoir,
Car ce n'est mie costume a prestre
Que vileins hons gise en son estre. ... (ll. 70-72)

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[61]See above, Chapter Two, Section 2: The Vocabulary of Shame, H. Terms Describing Making Amends or Paying the Debt to the "Other:" *Amender, Espanir, Deservir, Comperer, Payer, Vengier.*

Alez en sus de ma meson,
Il m'est avis ce soit ramposne." (ll. 76-77)
"You will never lie in my house, for it is not customary for priests to have peasants lie in their house. ... Go away from my house, in my opinion it is a dishonor."

Such characters are plainly misreading the "cultural code." Other characters consider their actions wrong, and the priest in (18) Le Bouchier d'Abeville is shamed by the butcher in revenge for his arrogance and insults.

Those few fabliaux in which shame is an outright ineffective deterrent do not suggest that shame was an ineffective sanction overall. In most cases, the person who fails to adhere to the dictates of shame is either presented as more concerned about being beaten or caught, or is selfishly pursuing his or her own interests, and/or is characterized in very negative terms. The dominating wife in (5) Sire Hain et Dame Anieuse, for instance, ignores the shame she brings on her husband by dominating him. She does not care if the neighbors hear her scolding her husband. When she is physically defeated by him in a contest to see who should (literally and figuratively) wear the breeches in the household, she is impervious to the mocking comments of her husband and the neighbors who witness the fight. The *conteur* ends the tale by stating that she now obeys her husband only because she fears the blows she will receive if she does otherwise: "Et por ce que les cops doutoit/ Nel desdisoit de nule chose" (ll. 398-399: "Because she feared blows, she did not contradict him in any way"). The greedy priest in (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier places his desire for wealth above considerations of shame. He repeatedly ignores reminders that he is acting in shameful fashion by not freely extending hospitality to a knight. He subsequently allows the knight to sleep first with his niece and then with his own mistress in order to maintain the terms of the agreement he made with the knight regarding the outrageously expensive cost of his lodging. The *conteur* makes frequent reference to the fact that the priest cares only about himself (ll. 48-52, 102-106, 939-941). For the priest, wealth and the selfish pursuit of what is in his own self-interest outweigh considerations of shame.[62]

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[62]See also the countess in (15) Le Chevalier qui fist parler les Cons. She is likewise unconcerned with shame but is fearful of physical chastisement. She tells her serving girl that she would sleep with the visiting knight, regardless of the shame that she would thereby incur, were it not for the fact that her husband would find out:

G'i alasse mout volentiers,
-Ja nel laissasse por la honte-
Ne fust por mon seignor le conte,
Qui n'est encor pas endormiz. (ll. 392-395)

Hence those situations in which shame is not an effective deterrent are revealing in that they show that shame was in fact a powerful sanction. Most of the characters who do something shameful do so in order to avoid some greater or more certain shame or to take revenge for having been shamed. Other characters who ignore the dictates of shame in favor of more material considerations are generally reprehensible dupes, concerned only with themselves and (if female) cowed only by threats of beatings.

Guilt as a deterrent in the fabliaux is markedly different from shame. Guilt rarely prevents misdeeds from being committed. Virtually never do characters refrain from doing some wrongful act out of fear of the guilt they may incur. The wife in (2) Constant du Hamel constitutes one of the rare exceptions. As noted above, she refuses the advances of the forester and the provost out of concern for shame. She tells the priest who propositions her that she is refusing him because she does not wish to risk losing the love of God:

> "...Sire, j'ai oï dire,
> Se vostre ami devenoie,
> L'amor de Dieu en gerpiroie..." (ll. 22-24)
>
> ..."Sir, I have heard it said that if I became your friend, I would cast away the love of God on account of it..."[63]

Some evidence of guilt as an effective deterrent against adultery appears also in (81) Le Prestre teint, in which the wife rebuffs the priest's lecherous proposition because, among other reasons, she would never consent to doing "tort" to her husband, a word which, as discussed in Chapter Two, generally has overtones of guilt. However, it is interesting to note that in this passage, cited just above, her greater concern is with shame:

> I would go there [to the knight's bed] very willingly - I would never not do it on account of the shame - were it not for my lord the count, who is not yet asleep.

While she does not in fact ignore the dictates of shame, it is for reasons that have nothing to do with considerations of shame. It is interesting to note that she is a deceitful person, later trying to trick the knight, and is herself duped in the end.

[63]Likewise she refuses the forester not only for the shame which she would endure ("N'i avrai honte ne domaige!" [l. 116: "I will not suffer the shame or harm"]) but also because she does not wish to displease her lord, a concern for the "Other" which could be interpreted as guilt:

> "Ja por paor de vostre hache,
> Ne por le don de vostre ennel
> Ne vos ferai dont vos soit bel,
> Por tant que mon seignor desplaise." (ll. 117-120)
>
> "Never out of fear of your ax, nor for the gift of your ring, would I do something that pleases you, for which my lord would be displeased."

La bone dame dist ja n'iert
Qu'el face a son mari tort
-S'el en devoit prendre la mort-,
Ne vilanie ne hontage... (ll. 45-48)

The good lady said that it will never be [the case] that she will do wrong to her husband, nor villainy nor shame, [even] if she were put to death for [refusing].

In almost all other situations in which guilt comes to the fore in the fabliaux, the wrongful deed has already been committed and the persons concerned express guilt over their wrongdoing because they are afraid of the imminent consequences. The wife in (33) Le Chevalier qui fist sa Fame confesse is a typical example. She feels no regrets over her numerous adulterous affairs until she becomes deathly ill. When she recovers from her illness and the possibility of punishment (eternal damnation) is no longer imminent, she again appears to experience no remorse and, although it is not actually stated that she returns to her adulterous affairs, she does continue to boss about the members of the household, a fact which greatly angers her husband because it indicates her dominance in the household and the likelihood that she will cuckold him once again (ll. 233-247). When punishment no longer threatens, guilt is absent.

As noted above in Chapter Two,[64] in several cases men attempt to make the women they love feel guilty in order to obtain their favors. The lover in (113) Le Chevalier a la Corbeille, for instance, tells the woman he loves that she sins in delaying their next rendez-vous for so long: "Grant piece a, e bien le savez,/ Grant pechié de moy avez" (ll. 95-96: "It's been a long time, and you well know it, you are very sinful with respect to me"). She denies that she has sinned in anything, as she has remained steadfast in her love for him, but she does agree to a rendez-vous that night. In (123) Un Chivalier et sa Dame et un Clerk, the cleric succeeds in making the object of his affections accede to his request for her love by warning her that if she refuses him, he will die and she will be guilty of murder. In this revealing passage, cited previously, he tells her:

"Certes, ma dame, vus avez tort!
Ne soliez bien Deu amer?
E volez ore un chaitif tuer!
Si jeo meur pur vostre amur,
Jeo requer nostre creatur
Ke il prenge de vus vengance.
Kant faire me poez aleggance,
Si issi morir me lessez,

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[64]Section 2: The Vocabulary of Guilt, C. Terms Describing Harm or Injury to the Other.

Apert homicide serrez!
Le main mal deit hom eslire
Pur eschure cel ke est pire." (ll. 310-320)

"Certainly, my lady, you are wrong! Are you not accustomed to loving God well? And now you want to kill a miserable wretch! If I die for your love, I will ask our Creator to take vengeance on you. If you let me die thus, when you are able to alleviate my suffering, you will be a true killer! One should choose the lesser evil to avoid the one which is worse."

After uttering this threat, the cleric falls back upon the bed as if dead and the lady begins to take his words to heart:

Pensa la dame: "Jeo ai tort:
Si cist se lest pur moi morir,
Ou purrai jeo lasse devenir?"
Par sei iugie e quide,
Si il meurt, que ele seit homicide;
Meuz li vaut fere un pecché
Ke seit encontre sa volenté,
Ke apertement e de gré suffrir
Un tel homme pur li morir.
De bon oyl le ad aguardé:
Teint le vit e descoloré,
E tant le aveit veu bel en avant!
Adunc se prist pité mult grant. (ll. 338-350)

The lady thought: "I am wrong: if I let him die for me, what will I, a wretch, fall into?" The lady thinks and decides to herself that if he dies, she will be a murderess; it is much better to commit a sin which is against her will than openly and willingly to allow such a man to die for her. She looked at him warmly: she saw he was pale and discolored, and she had seen him so handsome before! Thereupon she was seized with great pity.

The *conteur* in (93) Guillaume au Faucon similarly states that it is a sin for a woman to refuse to talk to the man who is in love with her:

Quant feme set certainement
Que home est de s'amor espris,
Se il devoit arragier vis
Ne vorroit ele a lui parler;
Plus volentiers iroit joer
A un vill pautonier failli
Qu'el ne feroit a son ami.
S'ele l'aime de nule rien,
Si m'aïst Dieus, ne fait pas bien
La dame qui ainsi esploite:
De Dieus soit ele maleoite,

Quar ele fait molt grant pechié.
Quant el a l'ome entrelacié
Du mal dont en eschape a peine,
Ne doit pas estre si vileine
Que ne li face aucun secors,
Puis qu'il ne puet penser aillors. (ll. 32-48)

When a woman knows for certain that a man is seized with love of her, even if he were to go completely mad she would not want to talk to him; more willingly would she go play with a vile cretinous scoundrel than she would her friend. If she loves him not at all, so help me God, the woman who behaves thus does not do good; may she be cursed by God, for she sins greatly. When she has ensnared a man in an evil from which he can escape only with great difficulty, she ought not be so villainous that she not give him a little help, since he cannot put his thoughts into anything else.

The woman in this fabliau does in fact give in to the squire's request when she obtains her husband's (unknowing) consent to the affair.[65] While guilt in all three of these fabliau appears to be an effective deterrent, all these situations in fact can be understood as typical manifestations of the code of courtly love, which suggested a man gain his beloved's affection by demonstrating to her how she has wounded him.[66]

As we saw above in Chapter Two, characters are also able to make others feel guilty and take action to prevent incurring further guilt by recalling how they have fed them, implying that they are thereby being disloyal by not coming to their aid. In virtually all other instances, however, guilt is an ineffective deterrent. As noted above in Chapter Two, many characters are said to be unconcerned with how their actions hurt or harm another. Guilt is an ineffective

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[65]See also (74) Le Sacristain III ll. 58-61, in which the sacristan tells the woman whom he loves that he wants to die when she refuses him everything.

[66]See for example Guillaume de Lorris, The Romance of the Rose, trans. Harry W. Robbins, ed. Charles W. Dunn (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1962) 10: ll. 196-201: I counsel you/ To let her hear your groans and your complaints/ That she may know that, troubled by her love,/ You in your bed could find no more repose./ Unless her heart is hard, she should be touched/ With pity for the one who bears such pain. See also 34: l. 152 ff. Cf. Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love, trans. John Jay Parry, ed. Frederick W. Locke, Milestones of Thought in the History of Ideas (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957) 20, in which the man engaged in dialogue with a woman says, "I believe...that God cannot be seriously offended by love, for what is done under the compulsion of nature can be made clean by an easy expiation. Besides, it dos not seem at all proper to class as a sin the thing from which the highest good in this life takes its origin and without which no man in the world could be considered worthy of praise."

deterrent in other ways as well. The duke in (124) Trubert fails to convince Trubert to release him by calling him a devil and by telling him that a beating is not merited: "Coment deable, estes vos tes?/ Ja ne vos ai ge riens forfet!" (ll. 802-803: "What devil, are you like this? I have done you no wrong!"). The prioress in (117) La Nonete is unable to convince the abbess to release their companion from prison by reminding her of how imprisonment may harm the nun. The word *pechié* in this context can be interpreted either as misfortune or sin: "Ma dame, ce seroit peciés/ S'ensi vous le laissiés mourir!" (ll. 132-133: "My lady, it would be a misfortune/a sin if you let her die thus!"). Similarly in (96) Les trois Dames qui troverent un Vit the companion of the lady who finds the *vit* fails in her bid to share it when she reminds her of the rule that, as *verreies compaignes* or true companions, they should share all that they find:

> "Dreit est qe ie part eye,
> Quar ie su vostre compaigne verreie;
> Vous sauez bien, si Dieu m'enioie,
> Qe nous sumes en ceste voie
> Compaignes e bones amyes." (ll. 27-31 M)
> "It is right that I have a part in it, for I am your true companion;
> you know well, so may God give me joy, that we are companions
> and good friends on this trip."

The wife in (93) Guillaume au Faucon fails to get Guillaume to give up his hunger strike for her love when she reminds him that his soul will be damned if he kills himself (ll. 423-424). The bishop in (68) L'Evesque qui beneï le Con likewise is unsuccessful when he forbids one of his priests to keep a concubine.[67]

In one of the few cases in which guilt does serve as an effective deterrent before a wrongful act has been committed, a concern with physical chastisement is what is uppermost in the character's mind. The newlywed wife in (83) La Dame escoillee assures her husband that she will not disobey him, making mention of the beating which he gave her in the past for countering his commands.

> "Ainc vostre conmant ne desdis
> Que une foiz, si m'en fu pis,
> Si en preïstes la venjance." (ll. 521-523)

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[67]See also (80) Le Meunier et les deus Clers II ll. 180-185 C, in which one cleric calls the other a devil for wanting to sleep with the miller's daughter, and reminds him of the misfortune they have already suffered in having lost their wheat, which they ascribe to their sins (l. 97 C). His warning his no affect. Cf. (127) Le Vescie a Prestre, in which the friars repeatedly urge the dying priest to make a donation to their house by urging him to do what is best for his soul.

"Never did I counter your commands except once, and it was the worse for me, for you took vengeance for it."

Guilt in the fabliaux is thus very different from shame in its role as a deterrent. While characters frequently avoid wrongful acts out of fear of the shame they may thereby incur, they virtually never avoid wrongful acts out of fear of guilt. When shame is an ineffective deterrent, it is usually because characters are taking revenge or trying to avoid some other greater or more certain shame. All this suggests that shame was a more important sanction than guilt.

The greater effectiveness of shame as a deterrent is also demonstrated by the fact that when both shame and guilt are called into play in a given situation, the force of shame typically prevails. In (125) Le Moigne, for instance, a monk experiences first guilt and then shame when he becomes sexually aroused at the sight of some beautiful women. The guilt proves ineffective; despite castigating himself for being a "pechieres," he continues to entertain lascivious thoughts:

"Las," dist li moignes, "Je sui mors!
Et que ferai je, las pechieres?
Que me demande cis lechieres?
Si ne le tieng mie a merveille
Se il a levee l'oreille
En contre si haut saintuaire!"
Aprés che ne demoura gaire
Que il repense a la folie... (ll. 16-23)

"Alas," said the monk, "I am dead! And what will I do, wretched sinner? What does this lecher want? I don't consider it at all surprising if he has raised his ear before such a high sanctuary." After this it was not long before he thinks again of folly.

Shame in contrast proves to be an effective deterrent, for when the monk, distracted by his lewd thoughts, allows his horse to wander off the road so that both he and the horse fall into the mud, the butchers in the market nearby all bang their hammers in unison at the sight. The monk, soiled and humiliated, appears to leave off all thought of the women:

...il fu tous de brai enclos.
Il s'amast mieus veoir a Acre,
Car tout li bouchier du machacre
Hurtent ensamble leur maillés.
A paines s'est levés Baillés,
Et li moignes est remontés,
Qui n'estoit pas bien essués,
Ains estoit laidement moilliés:
Il amast mieus estre escoillés
C'avenue li fust tel honte. (ll. 28-37)

He was completely covered in mud. He would rather have seen Acre, for all the butchers pound their hammers in unison. With

difficulty Baillis [his horse] arose, and the monk remounted, who was not at all well wiped off; rather, he was grossly soiled: he would rather have been castrated than that such shame happen to him!

The sanction of shame appears to prevail over guilt also in (20) Cele qui se fist foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari, in which a knight and his squire, while passing through a cemetery, espy a woman grieving at the graveside of her recently departed husband. The squire wagers the knight that he can seduce her on the spot. Shocked at his proposal, the knight immediately chastises the squire for being a sinner:

"Q'as tu dit, esconmeniez?
Je cuit que pas crestiens n'iés,
O tu as o cors lo deiable,
Quant contrevee as si grant fable!" (ll. 59-62)

"What did you say, excommunicate? I think you are not a Christian, or you have the living devil in your body, when you make up such a story!"

Guilt proves to be an ineffective deterrent, though, for the squire ignores the knight's words and instead challenges the knight to accept a wager: "Est ce fable? Je gageroie,/ Se ver vos gagier m'an osoie" (ll. 63-64: "Is this a story? I would wager [on this], if I dared to make a wager against you [that is, if I may have your permission to make a wager against you]"). The knight immediately agrees to the bet. The threat of shame implicit in failing to make a wager thus prompts the knight to action whereas the sanction of guilt fails to have any effect on the squire.

One could argue that shame in these situations is more effective than guilt simply because it is accompanied by more concrete ramifications than guilt.[68] Shame for the monk in (125) Le Moigne entails being covered in mud and mocked by the butchers, while guilt in this instance does not appear to be accompanied by any concrete ramifications. Shame for the knight in (20) Cele qui se fist foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari is accompanied by the threat of being considered a coward by his subordinate, the squire, while guilt for the squire again seems to involve no external forms of punishment.

In another fabliau, (16) La Housse partie II, both shame and guilt are ineffective as sanctions. A man under the sway of his domineering wife orders his aged father to quit the house The old man attempts to make him change his mind, pointing out how he has treated him kindly through the years and provided him with his fortune. The old man laments that, without

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[68]Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux, ch. 2-3, stresses the materialism that prevails in the fabliaux.

his son's support, he will have nowhere to turn. In short, he does everything within his power to make his son feel guilty:

"Biaus fieus," dist il, "Je te nourri,
Et saciés c'onques jour mari
Ne vous fis, pour que je peüsse;
Et sachiés que je vous peüsse
D'or et d'argent, puis qu'il vous fust[69]
D'autrui que de moi greüst.
Quant tu ensi m'en veus cacier
Je ne me sai u pourquachier:
Au jor que pour toi me demis,
Perdi l'avoir et mes amis. (ll. 69-78)

"Good son," he said, "I raised you, and know well that never a day did I grieve you, though I could have; and know that I loaded you with gold and silver, more than would have been done to you had it so pleased another rather than me. When you thus wish to chase me from here, I don't know where to look. On the day on which I divested myself for you, I lost my friends and my possessions.[70]

The father then begs his son to provide him at least with some covering against the cold so that the neighbors will not think ill of the son on account of how he has treated his father:

"Mais prier t'en vuel d'une cose
Pour chou que nus hom ne t'en cose:
Je sui molt debrisiés et vius
Et, cant ensi cacier m'en vius
De ton ostel et m'en eslonges,
Je pri c'une robe me donnes;
Et si n'ai cauces ne soulers;
Trop seroit mauvais le allers!" (ll. 79-86)

"But I wish to ask you for one thing, so that no man blames you: I am very broken and old and, when you wish to remove and chase

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[69]My translation is approximate; the editors of the NRCF state that the sense of lines 73 and 74 is unclear. The NRCF bases its critical edition on the edition by Anatole de Montaiglon and Gaston Raynaud, Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1877) 1-7. The manuscript was severely damaged by fire in 1904.

[70]In the version by Bernier (I) the father attempts to convince his son not to turn him out of the house by arguing that caring for him provides an ideal opportunity to make amends for his sins:

"Ja ne pués tu mieus espenir
Toz tes pechiez qu'en moi bien faire
Que se tu vestoies la haire!" (ll. 262-264)

"Never can you better expiate all your sins than in doing good to me, except if you wore a hair shirt."

me from your house, I ask that you give me a robe, and if I have no footwear or shoes, the going would be too difficult."

The son is impervious to both shame and guilt, harshly responding that his father's concerns are not his, and that it weighs on him that he lives so long (ll. 87-91). It is only when his father says he will leave if his son gives him an old cloak or horse covering that the son finally agrees to give him at least this small request (ll. 92-98). The son eventually decides to continue caring for his father and even goes so far as to make him head of the household again, but what prompts his change of heart is not the fear of being shamed for turning his father out of the house, nor any feelings of guilt, but rather the reminder from his own son, the old man's grandson, that he will be treated in his old age in the same way that he has treated his father. A materialistic consideration hence again predominates over considerations of shame and guilt. This is consistent with what Charles Muscatine identifies as the basic materialistic ethos of the fabliau: characters act in ways that satisfy their own materialistic needs, and not any higher cause.[71] There may also be echoes here of what has been termed a "results" culture, a culture in which the external results of an action, and not the inner thoughts and feelings of the actors, determine whether or not an action is considered good. Charles Radding argues that the early Middle Ages was a results culture in which most people were in the "moral realism" stage of development, a stage in which external rules, and not inner thoughts and feelings, determine the individual's actions.[72]

It is important to note that fabliaux characters often seem to make no distinction between shame and guilt. The father in (16) La Housse partie II, as we have just seen, attempts to use both shame and guilt in an effort to convince his son to change his mind. Similarly in (8) La Bourse pleine de Sens, the wife concerned over her husband's adultery draws upon both shame and guilt in an attempt to make him end his relationship:

"Vos meintenez une musarde,
Qui vos ocit et vos afole;
Et tot li mondes en parrole,
Car tote la vile le set.
Et dit chascun que Dieus vos het,
Et sa Mere et toz ses poeirs." ... (ll. 26-31)

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[71]Muscatine, The Old French Fabliaux, chs. 2-4.

[72]Charles Radding, "The Evolution of Medieval Mentality: A Cognitive-Structural Approach," American Historical Review 83 (1978): 577-597.

"You are maintaining a mistress who kills and harms you; and everyone is talking about it, for all the village knows of it. And everyone says that God hates you, and his Mother, and all his agents."

Her words have no effect. Later the husband encounters an old spice merchant who effectively begins to make the husband feel guilty by reminding him of how he is hurting his wife: "Tu as amie, si l'en poise?...(ll. 170). The text in manuscript A elaborates on how his wife suffers, and describes the husband tearing up over the pain he is causing his wife:

"Tu as amie, si en poise,
Par auenture, a ta moillier
Et si t'en voi les ieus moillier." (ll. 170-172 A)

"You have a mistress, it weighs, perhaps, on your wife, and I see your eyes moisten over it"

The spice merchant then warns the husband that he is shamed if he does not reconsider his actions: "Honiz es se ne te porpensses!" (ll. 182: "You are shamed if you do not reflect [on this]!"). He then suggests a way in which the husband can test who loves him more, his wife or his mistress. His parting words to the husband then make reference to guilt:

"Que qu'el die, ele est ta fame.
Garde ton cors, pense de t'ame!
Or fai ce que t'ai commandé,
Va t'en; je te commant a Dé!" (ll. 219-222)

"Whatever she says, she is your wife. Keep safe and think of your soul! Go, as I have advised you; I commend you to God!"[73]

What this ready mixture of shame and guilt suggests is that, in the world of the fabliaux at least, no clear distinction was made between shame and guilt. This is not to suggest that both were equivalent, however. Shame is typically an effective deterrent whereas guilt is not. When shame is ineffective, it is usually because the character concerned is seeking to take revenge, is trying to avoid some greater or more certain shame, or is simply a bad character. Such is not the case for guilt.

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[73]See also (2) Constant du Hamel, in which the wife cites both shame and guilt as her reasons for not cuckolding her husband (ll. 61-72, 115-120); and (103) Le Prestre et le Chevalier in which the squire tries to dissuade the knight from sleeping with the priest by implying that the devil is controlling him (guilt) and by telling him it is a despicable thing (shame) (ll. 1055-1059).

Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

Our examination of shame and guilt in the French fabliaux has shown that a shame culture ethos clearly predominates. Shame is described by a wider variety of terms than guilt. It is described both by terms that must describe shame given its definition, such as terms indicating diminished status and baseness, and also by expressions from other realms of experience, such as staining, soiling, filth, punishment, and injury. Guilt in contrast is described only by terms which must indicate guilt given its definition: terms denoting misdeeds, transgressions, offenses, recompense, forgiveness and punishment. An awareness of how one's actions have harmed the "Other" rarely appears in the fabliaux; when it does, it is usually expressed by husbands who are cuckolded, become angry with their wives, and then apologize to them when they are subsequently tricked into believing they were not cuckolded. Many terms indicative of guilt are related to punishment and vengeance and are employed only in situations in which punishment is pending.

How feelings of shame and guilt are depicted in the fabliaux also suggests the greater importance of shame. Few characters experience the feeling of guilt in the absence of the threat of punishment. As well, intention plays a very minor part in determining whether or not a character feels guilt. Characters tend to feel guilty regardless of whether or not they intended to do wrong; having done the act is what makes a character feel guilty in the world of the fabliaux. Innocent characters who expect to receive some sort of punishment for something they have not done lament and beg for mercy using precisely the same terms as characters who are in fact guilty, suggesting that it was the fear of punishment, and not an awareness of how one's actions have harmed the "Other" or how one has sinned, that was at the core of the experience of guilt in the fabliaux. In contrast, characters express feelings of shame even in the absence of others, suggesting that shame was more internalized than guilt. The feeling of shame also plays a more important role than feelings of guilt in fabliaux plots, either motivating the revenge which constitutes the core of the plot or being the end result of the tricking that constitutes the central event of the fabliau. Feelings of guilt in contrast tend to be very peripheral to the plot. Feeling ashamed in the fabliaux has definite associations in terms of character type, but feeling guilty does not: characters who succumb to feelings of shame without taking revenge are typically the dupes in the fabliaux, while characters who feel guilty do not fall into any one particular character type.

A wide variety of sanctions accompany the experience of shame and guilt in the fabliaux

and closely mirror the sanctions that we know were employed historically. As agents of social control, both shame and guilt are frequently used in the fabliaux as sanctions against sexual impropriety. Shame in the fabliaux is also used as a sanction against characters who seek to rise above their station, characters who demonstrate stupidity, those who are deceived or act like a fool, and those who exhibit cowardly or disloyal behavior. Beside cases of sexual impropriety, the sanctions of guilt are employed only in situations guilt must arise given its definition: cases of criminal behavior, failures to keep an agreement, cases in which characters break rules, and cases in which one character wrongly accuses or punishes another. Shame is generally an effective deterrent in the fabliaux. Most of the characters who ignore the dictates of shame are impelled by the need to avoid some greater or more certain shame or to take revenge. Otherwise characters who ignore the dictates of shame are reprehensible selfish dupes who care only about themselves. Guilt in contrast is rarely an effective deterrent and generally arises only in the form of regret after a wrongful act has been committed and punishment threatens. All of this again suggests the greater importance of shame as a sanction.

The Relationship between Shame and Guilt

Figure 2.6, the semantic network showing the relationship between the vocabulary of shame and the vocabulary of guilt, illustrated that the two often overlapped. Accusations and punishments were described by terms from the vocabulary of both shame and guilt. Punishments, part of the vocabulary of guilt, were often linked to revenge, which in turn was viewed as necessary for restoring the victim's honor after an affront, part of the experience of shame.

This overlap in vocabulary, combined with the fact that guilt both as a feeling and a deterrent occurs rarely in the fabliaux outside the context of punishment, suggests to me that guilt as evidenced in the fabliaux was in fact a subspecies of the experience of shame. Punishment was primarily a matter of taking revenge and restoring one's honor. Offenses had to be compensated for in some equal and fitting way not to restore balance, but to restore the honor of the victim.

It is tempting to speculate what this study may indicate regarding medieval French society as a whole. Charles Yedlicka has found that expressions of guilt in medieval French moral and didactic literature are generally motivated by self-interest, most especially the need to

avoid punishment, rather than a concern with how one's actions have offended God.[1] The theology of penance from the time of Gregory the Great, however, was very concerned with the inner disposition necessary to constitute true contrition and the forgiveness of sins and especially with the issue of whether sorrow was brought on by the fear of punishment or the love of God.[2] Certainly by the time of the Renaissance and Reformation an awareness of how one's sins had offended Christ was central to the writings of many saints and reformers.[3] As noted in the introduction, however, shame continued to be very important as late as the seventeenth century, when the Puritans came to America.

Were there two different "cultures" at work in the Middle Ages, an "official" culture that was predominantly a guilt culture and an "unofficial" culture that was predominantly a shame culture? The writings of the Russian (some say Marxist) literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin suggest there was an opposition between the "official" culture of the Middle Ages, ecclesiastical and aristocratic in spirit and concerned with preserving its own hierarchy over and against the peasant class, and an "unofficial" or "folk" culture of the "people" which saw its most typical expression in carnivals and parodic literature that celebrated the physical, the worldly, and the libido, and mocked those in positions of power and authority.[4] While it is now generally accepted that carnival celebrations were not revolutionary in any sense of the word and that parodic literature typically mocked not the ecclesiastical or aristocratic hierarchy as a whole but those who failed in their responsibilities to the other classes, still it is interesting to raise the question of whether shame was a phenomenon of the lower or less learned classes and guilt a reaction more typical of the more educated or higher classes. This study suggests there were no divisions along class lines. Expressions of shame and guilt in the fabliaux are remarkably similar to what we see in the aristocratic literature of the Lancelot-Grail cycle as described by Robreau and the moral and didactic medieval French literature examined by Yedlicka. While Muscatine postulates that we

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[1]Leo Charles Yedlicka, Expressions of the Linguistic Area of Repentance and Remorse in Old French (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1945) 96, 347, 415, 423-424 ff.

[2]See above, Chapter Four.

[3]See for example Jean Delumeau, Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th - 18th Centuries, trans. Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

[4]Pam Morris, ed., The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov (London: Edward Arnold, 1994).

see in the fabliaux evidence of an "outbreak of decency" that eschewed the use of "three letter words" and frank expressions of sexuality, our analysis of laughter in the fabliaux suggests that frank language was both considered shameful and was also a key part of fabliau humor. The laughter about things sexual derived not from any class-specific sense of humor or notions about what constituted shameful or inappropriate behavior, but from the breaking of a taboo against using obscene language, a taboo shared by all classes.[5] Indeed, we find a similar phenomenon in the ecclesiastical condemnations of *jongleurs*. They were condemned by clerical writers not because they were seen as sinful or because there was a fear that they would lead others to sin, but because it was felt they were lower-class and shameful. When Francisans sought to become *jongleurs* of Christ, it was seen as a form of self-humiliation.[6] In my view, then, there was no "official" as opposed to "unofficial" culture; there was only one culture, the breaking of whose taboos usually led to the experience of shame. Guilt in this culture was a secondary and relatively unimportant phenomenon.

Certainly the transition from a shame culture to a guilt culture, when it did occur, was a gradual one. This study suggests that the mechanism by which this transition occurred lay in the "tit for tat" view of vengeance which was core to the shame culture ethos in Germanic society. Vengeance as punishment readily blended into a concept of guilt as fitting punishment for an offense. The awareness of having harmed another, so central to our concept of guilt today, is present in the fabliaux only in the form of an awareness of being disloyal to that person who has fed or supported oneself. At some point (and perhaps under the impetus of increasingly abstract conceptions of the state) taking revenge came to be less focused on restoring one's honor and more focused on punishing the perpetrator. Perhaps nourished by penitential literature on the proper disposition of the penitent, feeling guilt over showing disloyalty seems to have blended into a sense of having wronged the "Other." The precise mechanisms by which these changes took place remain for other studies to explore.

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[5]See above, Chapter Two, Section One, Part 2 B, on laughter.

[6]Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, "Clercs et jongleurs dans la société médiévale (XIIe et XIIIe siècles," Annales 34:5 (1979): 913-928.

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